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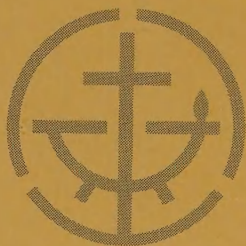
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WARDSHIP

SERMONS

By REPRESENTATIVE PREACHERS

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Modern Stewardship Sermons

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A5

By Representative Preachers

SELECTED BY
DEPARTMENT OF SPIRITUAL RESOURCES
CENTENARY CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH



THE ABINGDON PRESS
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

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RALPH S. CUSHMAN

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Preface

Modern Stewardship Sermons

"THERE is a wealth of material in the stewardship sermons just now being preached throughout the church which ought to be preserved for future use, as a permanent record of the church-wide Centenary Stewardship Campaign."

This is the sentence which came to the Stewardship executive secretary with enough data to carry conviction; hence this volume of sermons.

Concerning the sermons themselves, it should be said that they have been selected from a wide range of preachers in all parts of the country. They appear as first presented, except that in most instances, the Editorial Committee has been obliged to make abridgments in order to present a larger number of the manuscripts.

We wish to express our appreciation for the service rendered by the ministers whose names here appear and to those whose manuscripts either arrived too late for publication or presented an approach to the theme similar to that of some sermon previously edited.

Much credit is due Mr. Leon Wood, of the Editorial Committee, for his painstaking care in preparing the manuscripts for the printer.

In general, the book reveals the thoroughness with which the stewardship message is being presented throughout Methodism. Legalism seems to be swallowed up in loving loyalty to the Kingdom, and the general tone seems to be a yearning for the spread of gospel holiness, and for a genuine revival of evangelism throughout the church.

RALPH S. CUSHMAN,
Executive Secretary, Centenary Stewardship Department.

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Introduction

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

TO ONE who has been "listening in" while the Stewardship Movement has increased from a trembling whisper in the desert to a commanding voice in the councils of the church, this volume of Stewardship Sermons is both a gladness and a prophecy.

Let me say, first of all, that I am disturbed, not by the volume at all—which is altogether admirable—but by the vague transition period through which Christian thought is passing, of which this volume of sermons is but a token. As a church we have left behind us the narrow shell of mediæval theology, and yet we hardly have reached that spiritual freedom where-with Christ has made us free. The volume accentuates the fact that we are "in the midst of the years" and my uneasiness is the discomfort of an uncompleted journey.

I am a missionary. For years it has been my mental habit, as for years it was my daily opportunity, to take the creative Word and apply it directly to the souls of men who dwell in the shadows of paganism. I have seen the majestic and transforming power of the stewardship message "where the light is as darkness," and where I constantly had before me a people almost identically like the children of Israel when they emerged from Egypt. The principle of the separated portion was not preached in order to provide a sure foundation for "self-support," but that the fogs of pantheism might be cleared from darkened minds and the personal dominion of God established in thought and life. "Self-support" came as apples come in October—it was the ripe fruit of spiritual life. And as comes "self-support" to the mission church so comes all-round efficiency to every church.

Church efficiency means alertness, and when men are alert

and awake to "the King's business," then the new discovery of God himself is not far away. And this is my gladness—that these sermons show the alertness of an awakening church; that thousands of Christians are thoroughly sick of inefficiency and piffle. This is prime evidence that the God of order and efficiency is waiting to be revealed to modern man.

When Columbus sailed from the port of Palos he expected that a westward course would bring him to the magic coast of India. But God was planning greater things than Columbus ever realized. When the keel of the Pinta touched the sands of Salvador there had been discovered something more wonderful than all the fabled lure of the East; it was a matchless continent, hidden from ages and from generations that it might be revealed in God's own day of opportunity. The discovery of the New World was to be the saving of the Old.

When, a dozen or more years ago, the church began seriously to search out a "new financial plan," there was little more in mind than an efficient business system that would bring increased resources to our great benevolence boards and enable local congregations to care for their increasing obligations. But God had something in mind infinitely larger than church budgets and duplex envelopes. The Stewardship Movement means nothing less than a Christian interpretation of property. It is the revelation of God in terms of common life, the only possible foundation for a Christian social order.

HARVEY REEVES CALKINS,
Editorial Director.

I

Defaulting Stewards

By Clyde F. Armitage

WERE you ever indicted? Were you guilty? In this sermon you are told that you may be a defaulter or even a robber, and overlook the fact. You will also find a way to clear yourself and at the same time climb to the spiritual heights. The two good stories will amuse, and help you to remember.—Ed.

TEXT: "*Do good, . . . be rich in good works, . . . be ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*"—1 Tim. 6. 18.

CONTEXT: 1 Tim. 6. 6-12; 17-19.

WHO ARE DEFAULTERS? Many of us are guilty. Misappropriation of funds in trust is perpetrated not only by guardians, cashiers, and regular grafters, but by most of us. There are few men who do not continue, in their maturity, to act upon their boyhood principle of "finder's keepers," and then consider themselves owners because they are possessors. Perhaps a story will illustrate the point better than an attempt at philosophy.

ANDY'S WAY TO WEALTH. Under the general caption of "Our School's Vacation," Paul West told the following story before he went to France to finish his earthly work.

"Andy Anderson's new way to get rich showed up this afternoon, when the fellers went over to the die house crick, whare they had let in some fresh watter, to have a swim. When the fellers got to the fense by the road, they sean a sine on the fense which sed, 'No admision to this plase to swim unless for i sent, by order of Mister Andy Anderson.'

"Andy stood inside the hole in the fense & sed nobody could come threw unless they pade, & when Torp Stebbins ast

him what it all ment he sed it was all rite, he getting the idee from what Bol Haynes told him about the plase whare Bol had been on a vissit last month, whare thay was a plase like that and nobody could go in for a swim unless thay pade the man.

"Torp sed that dident go hear, just the saim, but Andy wouldent leave him threw the hole, and Torp tried to skweaze threw, but Andy hit him when he shoved his hed threw & thay started to have qwite a fite, when the boss of the die house come along & wanted to know what the matter was, & Torp told him. The boss ast Andy whare he got the idee he owned the die house crick annyhow, & Andy sed, 'Why I didnt say I owned it, Mister.' 'Well,' the man sed, 'then how did you think you had a rite to charge anny person to come in?' Andy sed he didnt know a person had got to own a plase to do that, but he gessed the man was rite. Andy is now going to try to find some plase which doant belong to anny person, so he can charge to go in it."

Men act on the same principle that Andy acted on. Each one tries to preempt anything available and charge the rest admission. They discover that it cannot be done unless the one in possession is acknowledged as owner. Few of them have the ambition to do what Andy did, "try to find some plase which doant belong to anny person so" they "can charge to go in it."

WHO IS THE OWNER? Is not the owner the original Creator? "In the beginning God created." Christians and the Church of Christ recognize that God is the owner of all—what we have and what we are. God has never sold out; he retains title to all creation. He grants to man dominion over the earth, the air, the water, over minerals, plants, and animals. In the exercise of that dominion, man enjoys considerable freedom. He gives of his skill, but God makes the skill possible and presents the opportunity.

OWNERSHIP IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. The Old Testament plainly asserts God's ownership. All that is belongs to "God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14. 22). "Behold, unto Jehovah thy God belongeth the

heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth, with all that is therein" (Deut. 10. 14).

"For every beast of the forest is mine,
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.
I know all the birds of the mountains;
And the wild beasts of the field are mine" (Psa. 50. 10, 11).

"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith Jehovah of hosts" (Hag. 2. 8.)

"And *lest* thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deut. 8. 17-18).

OWNERSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. The New Testament emphasizes the same teaching. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4. 7).

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father" (James 1. 17).

OWNERSHIP IN THE PARABLES. The parables of Jesus emphasize this teaching of the divine ownership and make it plain that he enjoys high purpose and privilege with God's property. The parable of the talents (Matt. 25. 14-30) points out our duty to use, increase, and return. Abuse, misuse, or nonuse brings loss and punishment to the unfaithful steward. The parable of the pounds (Luke 19. 11-27) and the parable of the vineyard (Mark 12. 1-9; Luke 20. 9-16) are similar.

BEGGARS DO IT TOO. An unfortunate man asked me for the price of supper. I took him to a restaurant and gave the cashier a coin. As I went out the door, I saw the beggar receiving the coin from the cashier, so I went back to inquire. His explanation was, "I thought that I would save ten cents of the amount for a bed, and the rest of the money would get me enough to eat at the free lunch." He was about to spend for booze that which had been set aside for food. Other men who count themselves respectable do the same thing. They receive gifts from the Creator, and then use them

for a purpose altogether different from that intended by the Giver; for pleasure, instead of service; for destruction, instead of construction. They do not intend to do wrong; but they lose their objective—forget their purpose.

THE THIRD PARTY. The dereliction would be of large concern if it were between the Creator and the individual. But it is the more serious because there are others to be considered. Frederick W. Taylor, in his book, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, says: "At first glance we see only two parties to the transaction, the workmen and their employers. We overlook the third great party, the consumers who buy the products. The rights of the people are greater than those of either employer or employee, and this third great party should be given its proper share of any gain."*

THINKING OF NO. I. The exigencies of life have trained most people to think first of Number One. The piety of some people has made them consider God first in such an exclusive way as to forget the rest of us. "Seek ye first his kingdom" (Matt. 6. 33). Jesus's teaching makes it plain that the kingdom provides for the welfare of men—material and spiritual, temporal and eternal. Jesus was the first champion of the rights of the third party.

SOCIETY—OTHERS. We cannot conceive of a state of society in which there would be no others. Where there is society there are cooperation, division of labor, education, and all the factors that make us debtors one to another. Among primitive people who lived on roots, berries, and game, there were found the dependent, old and young, sick and feeble, widow and orphan. There are also government needs. Society means interdependence. If society were eliminated, if there were no third factor, even then man would not be a rule unto himself. He would still have to answer to God.

PAUL AND OTHERS. Paul was thinking of the third party when he said, "I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish" (Rom. 1. 14).

* Harper & Brothers.

The Hebrews early made provision for their own poor and for the stranger among them. The climax of this teaching is in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10. 30-37); on this the work of the present benevolent fraternities is based. Men are their brothers' keepers; they know it, and have begun to administer the trust.

SELFISH BLINDNESS. Regard for the rights of others would prevent many industrial difficulties by inducing the employer and the employee to give and take for their mutual benefit. The nations at war came to realize that there are not only offensive and defensive powers, there are also neutrals. In the stress of the circumstances they did well to discover this. The United States of America has exercised patience in its relation to Mexico for the sake of third parties. In this difficulty, as also in the Spanish-American War, we have tried to be Christian stewards.

Not many years ago the Pennsylvania mines withheld coal from New England to increase the price. Many such instances could be named. Wheat or other food is cornered to keep it from those who are hungry.

HOPEFUL SIGNS. Respect for the third party is growing common. Shortly before the war an American life insurance company refused to sell stock to a London firm for three times the price they were receiving from their policy holders. A supreme court justice refused a flattering offer to become attorney for a railroad corporation. These things might not be legally wrong, and they would have brought large returns; but they preferred to serve their fellows.

CHURCHES SLACKERS. The church, which should have been teaching stewardship all through the ages, is beginning to formulate and practice it. Have local church officers planned their work with special reference to the unchurched? They may have thought themselves "workers together with God," and thought but little of the unchurched around them. Only recently has the church as a whole turned to the unevangelized part of the world. We have thought of Christ the Owner, and of Christians the stewards, but have thought

little of the heathen who would have taken the increase—if there had been any.

THE GOLDEN RULE. The best rule for administering stewardship trust is the Golden Rule. It is a practical rule of life; it keeps us on the level with our fellows. Every man who comes into the world is a debtor to the Creator and to others and has certain privileges; for the Creator and the third party are likewise debtor to him. The thing that needs emphasis, however, is the administration of the trust committed to us, to pay our obligation to others.

METHOD. In these modern times no one will deny the value of system. There is no excuse for a hit-or-miss method of approach. There are systems and systems. But the greatest satisfaction is found in the proportionate system. We fulfill our obligation by applying for the kingdom a certain proportion of income, and administering the remainder also as faithful stewards. The Creator is the owner of the whole trust, and he expects us faithfully to administer the whole. The system of proportion is recommended.

THE TITHE IN HISTORY. What is the proportion? History helps to answer this question. The Hebrew nation set aside one day in six for worship, and one tenth of income for its maintenance. Other ancient peoples used similar plans. Egypt, Babylonia, Phœnicia, Ethiopia, Greece, and Rome devoted a tithe to their gods. The custom was strictly enforced among the Hebrews and was practiced by Roman dictators, lawyers, farmers, shepherds, merchants, sailors, miners, and cooks. Demosthenes of Greece said, "It is sacrilege to retain the tenth."

Tithing was practiced long before the Hebrew nation was formed, and was not left behind with the old dispensation. The New Testament encourages it. Jesus and his disciples probably practiced it. The apostles and the church fathers taught it. Eight great councils ordered all Christians to pay it. Luther and Calvin urgently advocated it.

TITHING NOW. Tithing is practiced by many, and their record is remarkable. The practice transforms financial con-

ditions, pays old debts, meets new bills, erects buildings, provides equipment, increases salaries and allowances, multiplies benevolences, eliminates begging and merchandising, and injects new spiritual vigor. These results may be expected when the Lord is given a square deal.

TITHING MISSIONS. Mission churches in foreign lands frequently tithe. The Korean church tithes, the members not only tithing their income, but also giving a portion of their time—a certain number of days each year—for spreading the gospel. At one station the people pledged ten thousand days' service. The converts in Korea have averaged one every hour since the first missionary went into that country. History and the results justify tithing. This is the beginning, not the end, of stewardship. Christian leaders contend rightly that no one should be excused from paying the tithe. The specially favored should pay the tithe and then give. Who finds any joy in doing the least possible!

YOU OUGHT! Our largest stewardship is of personality; talents, ability, skill, as well as time and money, are to be administered. It isn't easy, but they can be proportioned, on time or value basis. One should participate regularly in an active schedule of church work. Share your time, share your talents, for the world's uplift. One or more afternoons or evenings a week can be set aside for specific service. The worker will gain more than those he helps.

THESE DO IT. I know a lawyer who gives one third of his time to religious work; and a real estate man whose secretary says that fully half of his letters pertain to church work. An insurance president gives one third of his income. A grocer, with sufficient to retire, remains in business, devoting his entire income. A lumber merchant has endowed himself and gives his whole time to kingdom work. So devout men in common environments are setting for us an example.

MANY WORKERS NEEDED. Many must give their entire time and talent. The opportunity of serving is an obligation which it will be perilous to refuse to meet. The

world needs teachers, musicians, artists, executives, planners, writers. The young have more opportunities than ever before. The interests of the third party demand that the person with the opportunity connect with the one in need.

PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD. The principal opportunity is found in joyful partnership with our Father in recreating his world. There are invaluable returns. Many a young man will enter college this fall to prepare himself for a "career," and will go through life without the sense of satisfaction that ought to be his and that would be his, if his talents were invested in a spirit of stewardship. This spirit will enable a man to live the Ten Commandments and say, "Thy commandments are not grievous." In this spirit Jesus had the joy of partnership and satisfaction, of divine approval. He is commonly thought of as the "Man of Sorrows," but it was for the pleasure that he derived, from the joy that was set before him, that he endured the cross, despising the shame. "O Master, let me walk with thee!"

"They that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6. 9-12).

"Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is *life* indeed" (1 Tim. 6. 17-19).

II

How to Have a Revival

By John H. Blackburn

WE sometimes find surprising things within us. Although we bristle at personal questions, afterward we feel grateful for the results of the searching examination. In this sermon, the preacher helps you to find yourself by the Socratic method: he asks the questions; you answer them. We all enjoy solving puzzles, especially if there is a valuable prize offered. You will be surprised at the treasures within you of which you were unaware.—ED.

TEXT: "*O Jehovah, revive thy work in the midst of the years.*"—Hab. 3. 2.

MUCH is said about wanting a revival in the church—an "old-time revival." It is said that the church is languishing. Many have lost their interest in the Kingdom. Some are wandering into worldly ways. The wheels of the church are dragging; something is needed to reawaken interest, to put new life into the church. A revival is needed. Let us analyze this desire for a revival.

WHY DO WE WANT A REVIVAL IN THE CHURCH? Is it because we feel the burden of the load we are carrying? We love the church; we are trying to be faithful to it; but the weight of the burden seems to rest upon a few; many seem to carry it very lightly; it is difficult to get the money needed to pay the preacher, to keep up the expenses of the church. We need a revival so we who are faithful may not have so heavy a load to carry, so there will be more to share the burden of responsibility for the church.

Do we want a revival because we love the church and would like to see it prosper? We have a pride in our church, we would like to see crowds of people attending its services and

thronging its altars. It would be such a satisfaction to see the church taking on new life, receiving more attention from the people. There is no particular choice as to what people, we have no people in mind especially; but we would like to see more interest in the church and more people attending its services. Because of our love for the church and our pride in the church we would like to have a good revival.

Do we want a revival because we are not enjoying our religion as we wish we might enjoy it? There seems to be a lack of enthusiasm in the services of the church; there is not that overflowing of spirit, that stirring of the emotions, that we would like to have; we do not get the pleasure and satisfaction out of the services that we would like to get. We would like to have such an atmosphere and such a spirit in connection with all the services of the church as would fill the soul with joy and make us feel like singing and shouting. We want to have a revival so that we can attend the meetings and have a good time—have the soul lifted up and the heart filled with joy.

Are these the reasons for wanting a revival? They are all perfectly good and legitimate reasons, I suppose. But let us look into the matter a little more closely. Let us analyze all of this. Let us see whether we can find in it that which is in harmony with the mind of Christ, that which God could honor.

You want a revival to relieve your own burdens, to make things easier for you. You want a revival because of your love for, and your pride in, the church; to satisfy your personal desire to see the church more prosperous and influential. You want a revival to stir up your own feelings and emotions, to create an atmosphere where you can enjoy yourself thoroughly in a religious way. Was it the thought of Jesus in his mission to make things easy for himself, or his disciples? Did he not say, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"? Did Jesus have in mind the prosperity of an institution? Did he not come "to seek and to save that which is lost"? Did he not institute the church to do that very thing? Did he not give the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the

gospel to the whole creation"? Did he put any emphasis at all upon just enjoying oneself, having a good time in his religion? "For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." He found his joy, and his disciples were to find their joy, in ministering to others.

SELFISHNESS? In this desire for a revival, how much is there of pure selfishness, of something centering in and about self, your own ease, your own comfort, your own pride, your own satisfaction and pleasure? How much of a real desire to minister to and to help others? Do you desire a revival so much that, instead of wanting to be relieved of burdens, you will be willing to assume added burdens in order to be more helpful? Are you eager for the church to prosper so that it may enlarge its activities, reach out into the community in larger and more helpful forms of service? Do you want the church revived so that it may have a larger part in the program of Jesus in carrying the gospel to the world? Do you want a revival simply that you may have more joy and satisfaction in your own life?

UNSELFISHNESS. Or, do you want it, so that your life may be strengthened and invigorated to make you more efficient in service for others? Have you a great desire that others may be reached and helped, so that you are losing sight of, self entirely? How large a place does your interest in others and in their welfare have in this desire for a revival? Is the desire to save others so paramount that you have it on your heart continually, that you have certain individuals in mind, and you are continually praying for them and seeking for an opportunity to say or do something that will reach or help them? Have you upon your heart a great burden for the world, that God so loved, that Jesus loved and died to save? Is there in your heart something of the passion that Jesus had for the world, and do you want a revival, in your heart and in your church, so that you and your church may do far more than ever has been done, to carry out the program of Jesus to save the world? Let us be honest and ask ourselves, "Why do I want a revival?" How much is there in it

of personal interest, a desire for something to react upon myself in some personal benefit and satisfaction? How much is there of unselfish desire for the welfare of others, making possible larger efforts and activities in serving others? How much are you praying for others? How much are you working for others? What sacrifices are you willing to make that this desire for larger usefulness for others may be brought to pass?

HOW TO HAVE A REVIVAL. This is my theme—How are we to have a revival? Some would say: "Let us hire an evangelist whose specialty is to work up a revival. Let us get him to come to our church, so that we can sit under the spell of his preaching; so that we can have our hearts touched and our emotions stirred by his stories and appeals; so that we can shout and weep and have a good time; so that sinners will be attracted and come under his influence and be converted and join the church; and then everything will go on so much better; it will be so much easier to pay the bills; the church will be more prosperous; more people will attend its services, everything will be more lively and interesting; and we all shall have a good time, a glorious time. Come, let us have a revival." Does not this express the idea that many have of a revival—get an evangelist or some one or something to work up a revival for us, for we need one so badly?

A REAL REVIVAL. I want to tell you how to have a real revival, in our own hearts, in the church, that will delight the heart of God, that will give a new impetus to all the work of the church, that will make it possible for the church to do more than it ever has done in all helpful ministry; that will wonderfully advance the program of Christ for saving the world. Do you want to know how to have such a revival? Are you anxious for such a revival? Let me tell you just how to have it. It is no nostrum of mine. It is no device of man. It is no elaborate scheme of working up a revival. It is the plain word of God. It cannot possibly fail, for it is backed up by a definite promise of God. Let me read it to you.

Here you will find my context. It is Malachi 3. 7-12.

"From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from my ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation. Bring ye the whole tithe unto the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to *receive* it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts. All the nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith Jehovah of hosts."

IT IS STEWARDSHIP. And now you are disappointed. You thought it was something new, some new discovery that I would bring to you. And here it is nothing but that old tithing business, that takes us down to the gross and filthy thing that we call money, that we pretend to despise in seasons of spiritual exaltation, but that I notice we all like to have and to hold on to. But that is exactly what the old prophet is talking about—money—material wealth in any form. What he has to say here involves the full recognition of our relationship to God as his stewards, and our willingness to fulfill our obligations to him. If we withhold from God what is his, the prophet says, we are robbing God; and any church or person engaged in such dishonest and dishonorable business as stealing from God cannot expect to prosper.

BLESSINGS. The prophet says, If you will be honest with God, if you will be square in your dealings with him, he will bless and prosper you in your undertakings. God throws out the challenge: "Prove me, put me to the test, see if what I say is not true." Why are tithes to be brought? "That there may be food in my house." That I may have that whereby my church can live and carry on its work; that will

make it possible for the church to undertake and do the things that I want to do. Here is a great, needy world; there is so much need everywhere; a world in need of all sorts of ministry; a world that is starving for the bread of life; and there is not enough in my house, the church, to supply the need. The reason why there is not enough is you have been robbing me by keeping back that which is mine. Bring in all the tithes, so that I may have enough to carry on my work of ministering to a needy world, and I promise you that you will receive a great blessing. Do you believe the word of God?

WE HAVE BEEN WITHHOLDING FROM GOD not only the money that belongs to him, but we have been keeping back some other things, some other values. Have you been giving to God his full share of your time? Have you been saying, "There are so many things I want to do for myself, that I really do not have the time to spare for this work of God in connection with the church"? Have you been giving to him the full measure of prayer? Have you been giving to him and his cause your real interest? Or have you been so engrossed in your own affairs that you have paid very little attention to the affairs of God and his kingdom, and so have been negligent even in your prayers? Have you been giving to God his full share of your thought and talent? There are many great and important interests in connection with the work of God and his kingdom that require the best thought and talent that can be devoted to them. Have you been giving to God his full share of these things? Have you given to him his full share of your strength? Or do you wear yourself out in your own work, looking after your own affairs; and then bring the fag end of your strength and vigor to God, and sometimes not even that?

If we have been withholding from God all of these things that belong to him, things that he needs to carry on his work, how can we expect his church and his cause to prosper? How can we look for anything but a languishing and deadness? How are we going to remedy it? By hiring an evangelist to bring a revival to us? By trying in an artificial and conven-

tional way to work up a revival? Is it not more sensible to go down to the root of the matter and make right what is wrong? Is it not more reasonable? Is it not the only honest thing to do—to bring all these tithes into the storehouse, to quit stealing from God, to give to him what belongs to him of our money, our interest and prayer, our time, our thought, our talent, our strength—give God something to work with, and then see if the blessing will not be poured out?

THE OBJECT OF THE CENTENARY MOVEMENT—what is it? To call into the church, God's storehouse, the tithes his people have been withholding. In the program of the Centenary Movement there is Intercession—calling in the tithe of interest and prayer. There is stewardship—calling in the tithe of money. There is Life Service—calling in the tithe of talent and strength. There is the organization of the whole church—calling in and utilizing all the tithes of service. If the church will respond heartily to the call, bring these tithes into the storehouse, there is no question but that God, in the fulfillment of his promise, will pour out the blessing. There will be such a real revival as you have never known—the church will be lifted up to a new plane of spiritual life and power; the kingdom of God in the world will receive a mighty impetus. Do you really want a revival? Do you want it badly enough to meet the conditions?

III

The Meaning of Christian Stewardship

By Harvey Reeves Calkins

WHAT is Christian stewardship? To define it is as easy as to live. Our stewardship definitions and our lives are incomplete. In finishing your definition the life will move toward completeness. And it may be that you will have to complete your life before you can complete your definition. In this sermon you will find a good beginning for a definition of Christian stewardship, which you can complete as you attain, achieve, and acquire.—Ed.

TEXT: "*I have a stewardship intrusted to me.*"—I Cor. 9. 17.

STEWARDSHIP, IN THE LARGE, is Jesus Christ's philosophy of life. Something else may be religion, but not the religion of the New Testament. In the wide sweep of present world-movement stewardship is at the heart. Civilization is steward of the higher human values. The men who have are stewards in behalf of the men who have not. To have is to owe.

STEWARDSHIP IS THE MEASUREMENT, as it is the expression, of personality. The word comes out of the imagery and life of the Orient. There is color in it and the glow of personal relationships. The word "trusteeship" suggests it, but this is cold and formal. A trustee administers the estate of a deceased or absent testator, and his service is conditioned by legal checks and requirements; he must do the thing as it is written; he is accountable to the courts. But a steward is not that. He interprets the mind of a present and living Lord, and administers his program. Like Eliezer in the tents of Abraham, "all the goods of his master are in his hand." The steward looks not to statutes nor to any legal

sanctions, but, rather, to a Partner's approval. His eyes are unto One who saith, "Prove me now." Therefore Christian stewardship is under one high compulsion and only one—loyalty. But this is absolute. "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."

STEWARDSHIP AT THE FULL includes all the active and moral powers and their expression in human values. The Christian recognizes the stewardship of privilege, of opportunity, of experience, of education, of talent, of mental and spiritual gifts, in a word, an inclusive stewardship of personality. And these are not only the tokens of efficiency, but far more—the measurement of obligation. They constitute a debt that must be paid. Out of the swirl of the world war, stewardship has been reborn among the nations. It must now become the life program of Christian men.

IN ALL THIS WIDE DEVELOPMENT the human starting point is determined by human nature itself: it is that primitive instinct which no one ever for a moment forgets, the instinct of possession. Here human worship emerges and Christian stewardship begins. Moreover, although the stewardship of possession is but a part of the larger stewardship of life, yet it determines the conditions of life. In common usage the word "stewardship" connotes a Christian attitude toward property, income, wages, and wealth—in a word, toward money; and within this field of obligation must be found the practical working of a Christian social order. Within this field, therefore, it is fitting that a statement should be made.

A MAN AND HIS MONEY—how shall the two be related? In terms of ownership or of stewardship? If in terms of ownership, the foundation of God is denied and the social order never can become Christian. But, if the social order is to become Christian, then the foundation doctrine of divine ownership must be accepted, and with this is accepted a fundamental principle of property acknowledgment which has far-reaching significance in the kingdom of God—the principle of the separated portion.

THE SEPARATED PORTION. In naming this principle there is no reference to the duty of beneficence, nor of "systematic giving." These have an entirely different bearing. The separated portion is an acknowledgment that one has acquired and is administering the property of Another. Here, in handling things, men make that discovery of God which they are craving—an awareness of God—"the Supreme Person in a world of persons." The familiar ethics of all property acknowledgment is here recognized in its primal significance.

Unless the dominion of the Owner constantly is kept in mind, the one in possession inevitably confuses possession with dominion. Nor is this an accusation of sin or a suggestion of disloyalty; rather it is a confession of limitation. The human mind acts that way and cannot help it. Therefore the separated portion is God's gentle reminder, "lest we forget." It is the Father's memory token, for it is not the value held, but the value withheld, that challenges attention and lifts the mind to the Owner of all. The separated portion acknowledges the sovereign dominion of God and establishes the believer in stewardship.

Thus established on basic principles, Christian stewardship now becomes a spiritual compulsion and social program.

ACQUISITION. *First*, the steward's possessions are acquired in righteousness and with justice to his fellow men. To fail here means failure altogether. Any material offering becomes a loathing if it is the price of iniquity. Nor will it be received. "Bring no more vain oblations," saith Jehovah, "your hands are full of blood!" If stewardship were the mere distribution of a portion of one's possessions, under the specious plea of beneficence, the very name of it would become a rebuke. Grinding the faces of the poor is no less a crime because one thereby is enabled to give largely to the associated charities. Unethical investments are not sanctified by missionary donations. If labor ought to share in the profits of production, playgrounds for the poor will not heal the bitter hurt. Nor, on the other hand, can labor ever claim a living wage if it scants a living service.

BUT STEWARDSHIP IS PARTNERSHIP. The recognition of God's ownership is the pledge that no dishonored dollar shall be brought into his storehouse. Stewardship means personality. Therefore, more than industrial profit or commercial gain, the steward desires that industrial and commercial relations shall be just. Money is a fine and subtle measurement of value. Therefore, Christian stewardship means that money-making which is not also value-making, shall be purged from the economic body.

Second, the steward's possessions are acknowledged in honor. The principle of the separated portion now becomes active and controls every part of his program. In loving loyalty he declares, "All things come of thee." Nor is this a form of lip service, it is an acknowledgment in the life (money, or some other measurement of value), the only valid acknowledgment that can be made in a world of practical affairs.

NO LITTLE CONFUSION has been brought about because the separated portion has been identified by some as the measure of one's obligation to the kingdom. By others it has been regarded merely as an efficiency plan to bring about habits of "systematic and proportionate giving." But this evidently falls far short of its purpose in any Christian view of property. The separated portion is one's grateful acknowledgment that God himself holds personal dominion over all that one possesses. It is not a subscription to any "fund" or any "cause." In setting apart this portion one is not thinking of the church nor its budget; one is not planning for missions nor movements. These will come presently, each in its own place. Just now one is shut in with God alone, author and owner of all things. It is the hour of acknowledgment.

AS TO THE RATIO or amount of the separated portion (which, let it be repeated, is not the expression of one's stewardship but the acknowledgment of it), biblical history records the setting apart the tenth of income and indicates a divine sanction for the practice and the amount. While the Christian steward cannot be brought into bondage to any legal

requirement, yet he welcomes any word of revelation that will enable him to know the will of God for himself. Undoubtedly he will set apart the proportion which God anciently ordained until he is sure that God has named for him another.

Third, the steward's possessions are administered in faithfulness. These possessions, rightfully acquired and honorably acknowledged, have now become a trust. This trust is to be administered—all of it, including the separated portion—as by one who shall give an account of his stewardship.

The separated portion, "God's peculiar portion," names its own field of distribution: It is to maintain and extend a separated movement in human history—the kingdom of God. The balance of income and of wealth is to be administered for the family, the social body, the state, the world. Therefore the question for practical administration becomes one of crucial significance in these days of Christian reconstruction: Can the Church project a program big enough and broad enough to compass the program of "the kingdom"?

"Who then is the faithful and wise steward?" Evidently, it is he who seeks to establish some just proportion in the distribution of his income, not only of the separated portion, but also of the remainder. Here "proportionate" as well as "systematic" beneficence will be practiced, and God's portion already set apart will insure that a just proportion will be observed, "even unto the half" of one's income. Indeed, not a few Christian stewards gratefully give away the larger part of their income year after year.

THE AVENUES OF OPPORTUNITY sweep inward to the whole nature of man and outward to the whole circle of the earth—the duty and the joy of family life, of social betterment, of civil and political amelioration, of scientific advance, of educational foundations, of human enlargement. These and a hundred radiating lines of service await the man who has acquired a competency in righteousness, who has acknowledged in honor God's dominion over it all, and who seeks in faithfulness to administer his personal stewardship in the world.

THE POOR. Nor is the Christian in straitened circum-

stances debarred from the joy of stewardship. Indeed, God's richest promises are unto the man, who, in the face of overwhelming obligations, deliberately takes a portion of his living and sets it apart as a personal acknowledgment of and for "the King, eternal, immortal, invisible." Unto that man is the assurance, "My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." It must be so. He has entered upon the program of God. The resources of God are at his call.

IV

The Cost of Money

By Chester Carwardine

MOST of us never thought of the cost of money. Money measures the cost of everything but itself: on one side money; on the other side all other values. It costs everything; it is a very expensive convenience. "Man knoweth not the price thereof." This sermon will help us to know the high cost of money. What has it cost you?—Ed.

TEXT: "*Man knoweth not the price thereof.*"—Job 28. 13.

THE MOST EXPENSIVE THING IN THE WORLD IS MONEY. Though it will buy many things, a man pays for it with many values. We buy it with life. We pay for it with time. When the net return for our lives and our time is money then the cost is prodigal. A mere millionaire is a profligate of life and time. We have paid a great price for the money we have to-day. We see life with a money outlook. It is difficult to place any values that are not money values. Education must be vocation. Matters must be practical. Life consists in arriving or getting there, and a man gets there according to the amount of money he gets.

This distorted viewpoint of life held full sway until the war made its absolute call. Then we found that our lives and time belonged to the nation. Our United States told us who could keep their lives and who must serve. The selective draft proved the nation's ownership of her people and the stewardship of her citizenship. In this new world hour there seems to be an opportunity to put money into its rightful place as a servant. If the stewardship, as taken from the church and used by the nation, can be conclusively shown to be an integral part of the church life, the world will never enter another materialistic century.

Job asks where wisdom is to be found. He says, "Man knoweth not the price thereof." He is right. Wisdom is found in those who build on the eternal foundations. Men do not know the price when they think God's world can be continually controlled and directed by money. Their leadership will fling us on the scrap-heap of war every time.

LIFE. Money has taken a great toll in life values. It costs what might have been gained. Many a man bought money when the same power could have been used to build character and the eternal verities. Money has a clever way of distorting a man's viewpoint. He is determined to keep his ideals, but he is also determined to get money. When the two are equally important in the man's outlook, ideals will weaken. It is so easy for a man to judge himself by yesterday rather than last week or a year ago or to-morrow. A man's ideals may be on a toboggan, even though it be a barely perceptible grade. A man cannot tell the smaller lie nor make the minor misstatement without letting rust get at the iron of his character.

CHARACTER. Money takes yet another toll. God has put in every man certain fine elements of character. They can be cultivated and brought to the fore in a man's life. Who has not seen these amenities lost in the grind a man makes for money? Nor does this apply only to the man of big business. It applies as truly to the man whose account is kept in a savings bank. He may be so desirous of having what he calls his share that he will sacrifice the education of his children that they more quickly may be earning money. In his anxiety to have money he is not able to see the value of a church nor of missions. His share of these must be carried by some one else. He calls this money his own. Since God did not hand him the money directly he has soon lost the truth that God may own all, even his share. I have a friend who refused to give to God's work at a certain time. He did not know it, but there was the beginning of the end of his Christian character. He bought his money with his Christianity.

OPPORTUNITY. There is also the cost of lost possibilities. There are the powers of a man's life that he has lost and does not know it. Before me is a book containing the story of the most famous treasurer of all time. Chosen to go down in history as one of the guardians of a world faith, he has come down to us as an outcast. We do not know what Judas might have been nor how he might have strengthened the life of the Christian faith. We do know that his life is the story of what a man pays for silver and gold. We do know that he never became what any man might have been who sojourned with Christ, a radiant light for the dark souls of men.

Though Judas sensed his failure, many a man never knows that he has lost the possibilities God gave him. He may be strong. He might have been stronger. He may be leading a crowd. He might have been leading a host. Along the line of his life he threw away some of God's talents. He may have dimly felt his handicaps but never sensed his loss. The man blind from birth can only know the beauties of nature by hearsay. He can have no visual imagery. It is no honor to John R. Mott to say that he might have been a Napoleon, but it is a world tragedy that we will never finish paying for, the fact that Napoleon might have been the Mott of his own age, and was not. Men may not know the possibilities that they sell for their money, but God knows, for he gave them the latent powers.

FAITHFULNESS. Another life cost is undependable Christians, followers of the Master who on some days are like him, but on many days are unlike him. Much of this is due to their distorted estimate of money. Money, if allowed to be paramount, quickly drowns the quiet voice of the Master. The church has paid a great price in lost prestige because countless followers have been Christian—until it entailed a cost. Then they were missing from the ranks—absent without leave.

These are some of the costs that have been paid with human life. It is not that we had to give life to get money, but that

we were not large-souled enough to see that we were bigger than gold. Money will continue to demand life just as long as we let it. It will continue just as long as the Christian Church lets money paganize its people. Once we truly Christianize money the world will start around the last bend in the road to the millennium. In other words, we must build around our lives and not around our money. We must make a place for the money before it makes a place for itself.

TIME. Money makes a charge in time as well as in life. Christianity has been with us many years in a book and in testimony. It has yet to be with us in the mass of human life. It has taken all these years of Christianity before we could even have a Centenary celebration of missions. Through all these years we sat in our little pews and thought if the gospel could be poured into our little souls, that was the fulfillment of the world purpose of Jesus Christ. When men would have carried the gospel across the seas we counted the cost. If we spent very much on missions we might have less to pay for our Sunday sip of the gospel. We could not see the results of preaching the gospel around the world. We could only see the cost. Who could have seen in those days that China and India and other countries might be lifted out of their dead past by Christianity? We could not see the values that might accrue to the world. We only saw the money that might be expended. We loved the thought that time was nothing to God. We construed that to mean that we need not hurry to obey the commands of the Master, especially if they were to cost money. We loved the text, "Carry no purse, no wallet." We were sure that referred to the time when we were doing the work of the Lord. We knew that there was something in the Good Book called stewardship. But it was one of those parts of the Bible that should always be a mystery in this world and revealed only in the world to come.

FAR EAST. If we could have made stewardship a part of the Christian life in the past as we are trying to make it a part now, what might have been the story of these crucial hours? We are constantly told by authoritative men that the

crisis of the future will be in the Far East. Christianity has awakened the Far East. It has sent enough men to leaven but not to lead. Yet who does not know the past days when trained men and women were begging for a chance to cross the seas for Christ? What was the answer? "There is no money; there are no plans." We sent a trickle when we could have sent a mighty stream. If we could have poured in the Christian leadership in the past when the hour of trial came the world would be safe. It would have found the Far East Christian.

AT HOME. The same story is found at home. We let great slums grow up in our cities. We let foreigners mass themselves in un-American groups. All this saved money. Let time solve these problems. These evil conditions might have been overcome. These cancerous growths on our national life might have been checked and stopped. But it would have cost money. Now we will spend more in a year to combat the evils produced here than we would spend in a decade to forestall them. Time was the price of our money. We held God out of the money realm and thereby put a drag on Christianity. It has taken to this hour to recognize stewardship. We have pushed it to the front in order to raise the Centenary. It would be better if there had been no Centenary if that proves to be its main use. If we think of stewardship as the means, and the Centenary as the end—then tragedy. We have not become stewards to put over the Centenary. We have the Centenary in order that the people of the church may become stewards. It is worth a hundred and five million dollars, if nothing else were done with the money, steadily to pour into the life of the church the truth of the stewardship that God has given to us. God has given us the future. Christ has made the purchase of all time. He has paid for the centuries with a great price. "Man knoweth not the price thereof," only Christ, for he made the payment. He has bought the future and given it to us as a heritage. It is our stewardship.

THE KEY TO A CHRISTIAN WORLD. Are we still going to pay for our money with God's time? The steward-

ship of our possessions and lives is the key to a Christian world. If we will give God only the share that he asks, Christianity will move out to the forefront of the moving world. Nor will it be a crusade for any empty tomb. It will be a host of followers in the train of Christ. At last a world shall see a church in earnest, not for itself but for Christ. A world shall know that we have chosen the High Way and they will follow.

"To every man there openeth
A way, and ways, and a way,
And the High Soul climbs the High Way,
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,
And every man decideth
The Way his soul shall go."¹

CHOOSE YE. What John Oxenham said of a man is true of a church. Whatever we may have chosen in the past, the new choice lies before us. Our money has cost us life and time. It is not too great a cost if out of these lives and years we have learned to conquer money. If we are now its masters, if we can make it do our bidding, if we can send it over land and sea at the word of the Master, then we have gained the wisdom of the ages. For wisdom lies not in books and learning. It lies in knowing how to use what we have. If this is the price we have had to pay for the wisdom of stewardship, it is a great price, but it is worth the cost.

The warfare of the church is not won. But if we have accepted stewardship, then the last dividing of our ranks has come. We are united. Our forces are one. And a united Christianity is invincible.

¹ "All's Well," by John Oxenham. Copyright, 1916, by George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

V

Why the Cupboard Was Bare

By Franklin Halsted Clapp

"COME on; this is different!" How often we hear it, and use it as an excuse for "doing anything once." If you don't like to read sermons—most folks don't—"this is different." It is—but try it for yourself; you have it in your own hands.—ED.

TEXT: "*These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*"—LUKE II, 42.

THE vivid imagination of childhood is not expected to give reality in adult thought nor to set the standard for mature conduct. Many children have listened eagerly to the story of how

"Old Mother Hubbard
Went to the cupboard,
To get her poor dog a bone;
But when she got there,
The cupboard was bare,
And so the poor dog had none."

And the children have gone to bed feeling so sorry for the poor dog and hoping that the unfortunate canine would not starve to death. That is very natural for children and just what we should expect.

EMPTY CUPBOARDS. But the adult cannot be content with mere sympathy. His intelligence must be satisfied, and he will ask: "Why was the cupboard bare? Was Mother Hubbard too poor to provide for the dog? Then the suffering animal should be turned over to the humane society." Or, "Was Mother Hubbard too penurious to feed the dog? Then she should be put in jail for cruelty to animals." There is

something radically wrong in a situation which presents an empty cupboard to a hungry dog, and every well developed mind feels the incongruity of the combination.

WORLD SITUATION. But what about the world situation—the hungry hearts and outstretched hands in China and Korea and India and Africa? They cry for the Bread of Life, and the Christian Church gives them the stony answer: "The cupboard is bare!" Hundreds of thousands asking for baptism but meeting refusal because there are no funds to provide the necessary religious teachers. But why is the cupboard bare? Why does the hungry heart of heathendom look in vain to the Christian Church? Has God made a mistake in opening up the heathen world in this particular age? Has he miscalculated the resources of the Christian Church? Surely we know better. The church was never so rich as now. The cupboard is bare in the face of a starving paganism because the church has departed from God's plan of stocking the cupboard for every kingdom emergency.

THE CURE FOR THE EMPTY CUPBOARD is to be found in the principle underlying the text: "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." The Pharisees were long on the tithe, but short in judgment and love. Our Lord insisted that both were important and one should not be practiced to the exclusion of the other. The Christian Church has been long on judgment and love but short on the tithe, and "short on the tithe" means a bare cupboard. The ruling of Christ still holds for the church, only with reverse emphasis: "These ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone." It is not enough that we love the helpless heathen and go to sleep judging what a misfortune it is that they do not know about Christ. It is equally our duty to tithe our resources in order that they may have the Gospel in a degree commensurate with their need and their eager receptivity.

WE ARE NOT UNDER LAW but under Grace, is the happy phrase we love to repeat when duty seems to cross

swords with self-interest. Very true it is that we are not under bondage or condemnation of the law. On the contrary, we are in Grace, but in Grace in order that by the power of the Spirit the "righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us." The distinction between ceremonial laws and moral laws needs to be kept in mind. The ceremonial laws passed with the Jewish dispensation. The moral laws define great principles of righteousness which never change. It was a sin to kill when Cain slew his brother Abel. It is no less a sin to-day. It was a sin to steal when Achan took the wedge of gold, and it is equally a sin to steal to-day. It was a sin to lie when Ananias tried to deceive the apostle Peter, and it is manifestly a sin to-day.

LAW NOT ARBITRARY. These great moral laws which abide are not arbitrary. They do not make duty, they define it. A thing is not right because the law says so, but the law says so because the thing is right, just as the laws of health are not the arbitrary decrees of the scientist, but the statement of the principles which govern health and physical well being. The moral laws are really the benign principles which govern our spiritual and moral well being. "This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days," saith the Lord. "I will put my laws into their hearts and upon their minds also will I write them."

SABBATH. Sunday is an excellent illustration of the fact that God's laws are fundamental to man's well being. The old Jewish Sabbath with its legal observances passed with the development of the Christian Church. But the principle of keeping one day in seven as sacred to God has remained. The early church emphasized the First day rather than the Seventh, because on this day Christ arose conqueror over death. And wherever Sunday is observed faithfully the practice is found to minister to the well being of man both physically and spiritually. It is one of God's great moral laws and is essential to the highest health of soul and body.

THE LAW OF THE TITHE is another fundamental

principle of man's well being. The Psalmist tells us that "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." And this sense of divine ownership was felt at the very beginning. The offerings of Abel and Cain were an acknowledgment of their indebtedness to God for all they were and had. Very early, too, the amount which God expected became clear in the minds of devout men. Abraham offered tithes to Melchizedek. Jacob, after his dream of the ladder reaching to heaven, vowed as an expression of spiritual quickening, that "of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." These incidents coming so long before the laws of Moses, afford strong reason for us to believe that the payment of the tithe became a practice not by arbitrary enactment on the part of man, but by the recognition of a divinely implanted sense of obligation which required this amount in acknowledgment of God's claims.

EARLY CHURCH. When we turn to the history of the Christian Church we find that the tithe was the standard of giving for centuries. The early fathers speak of it as a practice that should be continued in the church. Irenaeus, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Augustine all declare that one-tenth is the portion due to God. Doubtless some one is thinking, "Is not stewardship the Christian standard in regard to wealth?" Most certainly, that is the Christian ideal, and tithing is the first step in the realization of stewardship.

THE TITHE ACKNOWLEDGES GOD'S OWNERSHIP on God's own terms. This should not lessen, but increase, man's readiness to use the nine-tenths as a faithful steward. The stewardship ideal requires that one should recognize God's claim upon one's time as well as wealth, but this does not alter the obligation to observe Sunday as especially sacred to God's service. Indeed the Christian who is most devout in the use of Sunday is most likely to feel the sacredness of the other six days of the week. So, too, the one who obediently pays the tithe to God will be most likely to seek God's direction in the use of the other nine-tenths. The

universal testimony of those who do tithe bears out the statement that the law of the tithe is a divine principle that operates for the spiritual well being of the one who faithfully obeys it.

THE YELLOW STREAK. We must acknowledge, even reluctantly, that there is a yellow streak in most of us. It is an unwelcome fact, but to be truthful we must admit it. The line of demarcation between the instinctive promptings of self preservation and willful assent to greed and lust is often very faint. We hear appeals that stir our hearts and fill our eyes with tears of genuine sympathy and Christian interest, but when we come to play our part in meeting the need that has so moved us, we feel such a strange contracting of the purse strings. How many arguments we have had with ourselves about what we really ought to give, and after we have decided on an amount, the question still persists and in the sincerity of our hearts we wonder whether we have been generous or mean—white or yellow. The practice of the tithe will enable us to avoid such uncertainty about the genuineness of our devotion to the kingdom. We have then the satisfaction of knowing that we have obeyed one of the fundamental principles of spiritual health and are prepared for the fullness of joy which can come through free-will offerings and the complete practice of stewardship.

COVETOUSNESS is one of the deadly sins about which we are repeatedly warned in both the Old and the New Testaments. Like the many ailments of the body, the germ or the beginning of disease may be lodged in the system long before we are aware of it. A visit to the osteopath may give a helpful hint. When he runs that broad thumb up and down the spine we give a sudden wince as the pressure comes on the sore spot which we did not know was there. Back his thumb comes to that same place and dwells there until we are forced to exclaim: "There are plenty of other joints in the spine—why put all the pressure on one sore spot?" His reply is illuminating: "That is just why I am pressing there. When the spine is adjusted and the nerve centers are relieved the

sore spot will disappear." Perhaps the tithe is God's Thumb! At any rate it quickly finds the sore spot in the spiritual anatomy of most of us.

WHEN WE SUBMIT to it, however, our spirits readily bend to the divine will and we have a Christian vigor that is exhilarating, and this is why the joy lasts! We have not only the sense of pleasing God by obeying his law, but the thrilling knowledge that our faithfulness in this particular means a full cupboard in the church. It means a new sense of reality in all our Christian experience. No longer will many of our hospitals in China be closed for lack of funds. Never again will tribal chiefs in Africa travel scores of miles for Christian teachers to lead them to Christ and go back through the jungle to their waiting people disappointed and broken hearted. No further need that the mass movements of India shall reveal her wandering millions as sheep without a shepherd. The answer to the world's cry will no longer depend upon the caprice of man's changeable moods. Because we have systematically fulfilled God's law of harvest and brought the whole tithe into the storehouse, there will be "meat in the house." We have "proved the Lord" and he will show that his plans are adequate. He will "open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

VI

Stewards of Grace

By William L. Collin

SOME foods stimulate us. Certain friends leave us spiritually exalted. And the flavor wasn't all there was to the food, any more than "a simple twist of the wrist and the way you hold your mouth" was the secret of our friend. We got something that stayed, strengthened and cheered us. This sermon is an example.—ED.

TEXT: "*As each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*"
—1 Pet. 4. 10.

THE DOCTRINE OF STEWARDSHIP is not a novel idea, nor a theological fad of the passing moment, nor a temporary expedient seized upon to swing the church into line in the urgent exigencies of the time. It is a doctrine of ancient and noble lineage. Paul comprehended it when he said: "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price," John the Seer had a vision of it when he exclaimed: "But if any one hath this world's wealth and seeth that his brother man is in need, and yet hardens his heart against him—how can such a one continue to love God?" (Weymouth). Peter proclaimed it when he described his fellow Christians as "good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

THE IDEA OF DUTY, to which Peter gives expression when he speaks of life as a stewardship, is valuable because it offers a good, clear, practical, working definition of Christian discipleship and the obligations that are involved therein. It is a regrettable but indisputable fact that a great many Christians seem at a loss to know precisely what is expected from them in the Master's work. They are like recruits that have not learned just where their place in the ranks really is. They

are without any guiding principle by which to shape their lives toward fruitful, happy, efficient service.

"Like a mighty army moves the Church of God"—so we sing. Anyone who has any conception of how an army moves—the order, the coordination, the close relation of part to part, the forward sweep of marching men, each one knowing his place and what is expected from him—knows that to speak of the church moving as a mighty army is to use a picturesque poetic phrase that, alas! is far from the realities of the case. The average Christian is a rather confused individual, and his conception as to where his place is in the ranks of Christ's fighting men is somewhat hazy.

THE AVERAGE CHRISTIAN can tell usually with close exactitude when he became a Christian. He will be able also to inform you as to how he became a Christian. But ask him as to why he became a Christian, and there he will hesitate. He desires to be informed. Set before him a place of service, and you have performed for him a real favor. When the fisherman apostle defines discipleship as stewardship, he performs for every Christian a vital service in that he gives a guiding principle by which we discover at once what is expected of us, and thus enables us to take our place in the ranks as effective fighting men for the Master.

When Horace Bushnell declared "that one more revival was needed, the revival of stewardship, and then the millennium would come with power," he had in mind not merely the dollars that would be laid upon the altars of the church, but he had a vision of well-knit bands of men going forth to smite with shattering blows the powers of death and sin. It must have been an idea akin to that in the thought of Ralph S. Cushman, executive chairman of the Joint Centenary Stewardship Department, when he announced: "We are not at all interested in working for 'A Million Tithers in Methodism' save as this will raise up a million good soldiers enlisted for the Christian conquest of the world." Christian discipleship defined as "stewardship" enables us to keep clear the distinction between our "assets" and our "liabilities." A great many

people take life as an "option" rather than an "obligation"; their concern is with what they can get out of life and not with what they can put into it.

FOR MYSELF. In Stewardship Starting Points Harvey Reeves Calkins tells of an ambitious young Brahman of Madras who wrote: "Sahib, can you not help me to reach America and enter an American college? I am sure if I could take a degree from an American college I would make a great name for myself." He is to be commended for his desire to take a degree from an American college, but in the use he intended to make of it—"to make a great name for myself"—he betrayed the fact that he would regard such an attainment as a personal asset, and not as a liability imposing upon him an obligation to those less highly privileged. Let us reflect that the young man is not alone in his attitude, and that in America there are no small number who count their attainments, their educational advantages, their manifold privileges as "assets," not "liabilities."

STEWARDSHIP DOES NOT CONCERN ITSELF PRIMARILY WITH MONEY OR PROPERTY. But, as Mr. Calkins has pointed out, "Stewardship is the Christian appraisal of privilege, of opportunity, of power, of talent, of education, of the whole underlying force of personality." This will demand a revised method of bookkeeping. If stewardship is the law of life, we shall be careful not to credit to ourselves as "assets" the gifts that have been intrusted to us by the Great Depositor, which should be entered in our "books of life" as "liabilities."

GOD IS THE GREAT DEPOSITOR. For "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." The manifold gifts of God's grace—life, personality, talent, education, national privileges, liberty, possessions—all these are God's investment in us. Paul utters this thought when he says to Timothy, "That precious treasure which is in your charge, guard through the Holy Spirit, who has his home in your heart" (2 Timothy 1: 14, Weymouth's

translation). We must remember that these are not personal "assets," but God's deposits and investments in us, and are therefore sacred "liabilities."

(1) LIFE ITSELF, with all its marvelous mental endowments, represents a deposit of God. It means that he has invested ■ part of himself in us.

"Upon the day that I was born
God said, 'Another man shall be,'
And the great Maker did not scorn
Out of himself to fashion me."

Life, with its mysterious powers of personality, is not to be taken as an asset," but must be regarded as a "liability."

(2) CITIZENSHIP, with all that American citizenship stands for, of educational opportunities, of cultural advantages, and high standards of living, is not an "asset" but a "liability." Abraham Lincoln recognized the stewardship of patriotism, when, at Gettysburg, he called his fellow citizens to the high resolve "that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this country, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

Our country entered the world war because the great mass of Americans regarded their citizenship not as an "asset" but as a "liability." We hesitated and debated, but when it became clear that our ideals and traditions were being trampled under foot by the ruthless foe our liability for the preservation of these ideals and traditions plunged us at last into the conflict. The citizenship of peace has its liabilities no less urgent and vital than those of war.

(3) OUR RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES AND ADVANTAGES are not "assets" but they carry with them sacred liabilities. Peter said, "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

WHERE SOMETHING DIFFERENT HAPPENS. Peter speaks of the "manifold" grace of God. Manifold means

variegated, many-colored, as the rainbow is. God, through the gift of his Son, has set up a great fountain in the center of the ages, and from it the manifold streams of blessing have been flowing down the years. That fountain has been sending its sparkling streams playing over the arid reaches of life's desert places, and men, weary and ready to perish, have drunk from the refreshing streams and have found new life and strength. Our personal life, our life of citizenship, and our spiritual life, are all gifts from the fountain of God's manifold grace. Let us lay ourselves out to follow the words of Peter: "As each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

STEWARDSHIP AND TITHING. Not a few people think that "stewardship" and "tithing" are synonymous terms, and that when they have become tithers the obligations have been fully met. But stewardship is a much more comprehensive conception of life than that which is included in the practice of tithing. It is easily possible for one to be a "tither" all his life and yet never to have even glimpsed the beautiful and wonderful things which are reserved for those who have entered into the larger kingdom of stewardship.

The true artist is at infinite pains in dealing with the background of his picture, investing it with breadth and atmosphere so that his work when complete may be beautiful and true. The Pharisee was a tither; but his observance of the law of the tithe was not related to any background of loyalty to God or vital concern for the great causes of humanity. Although a tither, his life was narrow and hard and devoid of sympathy and charm.

"FRACTIONS" OR "MINIMUMS" cannot be satisfactory to us who are redeemed by One who gave himself, not partially, with only a fraction of his blood, but by Him who gave himself in unreserved completeness and who poured out his blood in the last full measure of an unstinted devotion for our salvation. If we are his at all, we are his because he gave a "whole life" to redeem us. And if we are his, all that we have belongs to him.

Christian stewardship, therefore, arises in a recognition that a Whole Life has been given for us, and that we must meet that gift with nothing less than a full commitment of our whole lives. This includes the tithe as the whole includes the part. As the part is not the whole, so tithing is not the whole of stewardship; and one may be a tither and not be a steward, but one cannot be a steward and not be a tither.

But some one may claim that, if all has been put at the disposal of the Master, then the necessity for the regular and systematic bestowal of a fixed proportion no longer exists. The tithe is the initial test of the reality of the professed complete commitment. For if one has placed all at the Master's disposal, there should be no difficulty, in ratification thereof, to give regularly a fixed proportion of that which as stewards we hold only in trust for him.

THE TITHE—A TEST. As Robert E. Speer has said, "We need some practical abiding principle like this to make sure that the principle of stewardship is a reality in our lives." By paying the tithe the true steward acknowledges the sovereignty of Christ over his whole life, and indicates that he holds all as a sacred trust to be administered for him.

A BROADER STEWARDSHIP. Furthermore, the "good steward" not only acknowledges the sovereignty of Christ over his own life but recognizes Christ's right to sovereignty over the whole life of the world, and to make that sovereignty an assured fact, places his life and all its resources at the disposal of his sovereign Lord. The need for a whole-souled commitment to the principle of stewardship and all that it implies, on the part of every disciple of Christ, is an imperative requirement in view of the conditions of the world to-day. And only as Christ is made regnant in all human affairs can the tumult and the tempest be stilled.

LIFT UP A STANDARD. David Livingstone voiced the very heart of the stewardship message when he said: "I will place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of Christ. If anything I have will

advance the interests of that kingdom, it shall be given away or kept only as by giving or keeping it I may promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes in time and in eternity." Alas for the professed follower of Christ who takes any other attitude toward his possessions or resources of any kind, and in the face of crying needs and glowing opportunities such as have never been in conjunction before, fails his Master!

The inner promptings of a measureless obligation to Him who loved us and gave himself for us, and the urgent needs of a suffering world, constrain us to give ourselves with unreserved allegiance to the stewardship conception of life, resolved henceforth with loving loyalty to serve our Master as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

VII

The Life of Stewardship

By Ralph S. Cushman

THE stewardship life is complete living. Stewardship is holiness, working with God, going on to perfection. It has an ordered movement. Perennial revival takes the place of spasmodic "protracted meetings." Individuals and churches live the year round. Nothing of value is omitted from the life of stewardship.—ED.

TEXT: "*As he did aforetime.*"—Dan. 6. 10.

I. DANIEL—THE STEWARD

THERE was nothing very spectacular about it, but excitement ran high in heaven, I doubt not, when the news came that another steward of the gospel of God had met the crisis of his career, and had not failed. No, there is nothing very spectacular about it—until you put yourself in Daniel's place, and realize the faith it took and the nerve it took, to kneel down before that open window and pray "*as he did aforetime.*" The light that flames from the pages of this book reveals a steward of God, face to face with a great crisis, victoriously doing just "*as he did aforetime.*"

Where can you find a nobler example of faith and holy character than that of the man who, when he faces life's storm and stress, can go on, in blessed security, doing just as he did aforetime? If some artist, knowing the background of that testing hour, could put into the upturned face of that man, kneeling before an open window, the things that are moving in his soul so that we could see them, we should have a picture, that would thrill the world.

Moses furnishes what at first seems a parallel case. He has comforted many with his words, "Stand still, and see the salva-

tion of Jehovah" (Exod. 14. 13). But Moses had been given assurance. God would deliver! Daniel had no such assurance.

Washington Gladden describes another type of quiet resting:

"In the bitter waves of woe, beaten and tossed about
By the sullen winds that blow from the desert shores of
Doubt,
When the anchors faith had cast are dragging in the gale,
I am quietly holding fast to the things that cannot fail."

Daniel's secret is suggested by neither of these words. What is it? First of all, Daniel's crisis was not personal. He must live or die to the glory of his God and the advancement of his kingdom. He did not ask, "Will God be true to me?" but, "Will I stand true to God?" He thought of his stewardship, not himself. He was a steward of the power and the goodness of God before a heathen race. His sense of stewardship led him to refuse to defile himself with the king's meat and the king's idols. Death? What matters! Just one thing was his task—to show to these people the more excellent way.

"I have come," said Donald Hankey before he died, "to see through the eyes of God." So had Daniel. Paul prayed not for deliverance from death, but that Christ might be "magnified in my body whether by life or by death." This was Daniel's passion, his fixed purpose, and that is why we find him, in the hour of crisis, doing "as he did aforetime."

II. SYSTEMATIC RELIGION

But there is a still greater matter Daniel teaches us—the power and glory of systematic religion. For him to see that life is a trust to be used for God was to realize that the faithful stewardship of life involves the life of stewardship—unchanging holy habits.

Men do not rise to high heroism, goodness, devotion, or success by sudden flights. It takes the set face to build a life.

"I go to prove my soul;
What time, what circuit first, I ask not;
But unless God send his hail,
Or blinding fire balls, sleet, or stifling snow,
In some time, God's good time,
I shall arrive."

Not by occasional outbursts of faith and devotion, but by systematic religion and holy habits, did Daniel become immortal in his hour of trial. He heard God's call; he proved his soul; he arrived. He did "as he did aforetime." On no other plan can any prove his loyalty.

Good literature, says Carlyle, is "the fruitage of systematic toil." Edison has said that genius is not inspiration, but perspiration. A great singer "tells that the neglect of exercise of the vocal cords for a single week means that flabby notes will creep into the tones." Of Webster, the peerless orator and debater, it is said, "No man has ever lived whose eloquence was more truly the fruitage of culture and training."

And in the molding of morals, the story is the same. "Thank God every morning," says Kingsley, "when you get up, that you have something to do that day that must be done whether you like it or not. Being forced to work and to do your best will breed in you self-control, temperance, strength of will, and a hundred other virtues that the idle will never know." There is no other than this way of system, method, habit, by which the Christian can prove himself a faithful steward.

Systematic worship is not the enemy of spontaneous devotion. It is the mother of inspiration and spiritual elevation. Jesus climbed the Mount of Transfiguration because he learned to walk in the valley. And who more truly than David strikes the higher notes of holy song? To him, "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Psa. 19. 1). Everything in earth and sea and air inspires him to sing. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." But David reveals the secret of his heavenly soarings when he says, "Evening, morning, and at noonday I will pray unto thee."

"The great glaring denial of faith and duty," said Bishop James M. Thoburn, "which stands out before the world to-day, so clearly that it cannot be concealed, is the refusal of those who bear the name of Christ to execute the great commission which their Master has given them." But the trouble lies deeper—in the heresy of spasmodic religion.

A newly converted woman, desirous, as new converts are, "to

do something," was detailed by her pastor to invite the backsliders to the protracted meetings. She had been reluctantly admitted into a neighbor's home, where the hostess coldly continued her mopping. Conversation lagged until the visitor remarked:

"I have come to invite you to the revival meetings at the church." Then a change came. Her face softened and the mop rested.

"Revival meetings! Did you say there was going to be revival meetings? Yes, indeed, I'll come. Why, John and me has got religion at revivals every winter for the last ten years!"

The visitor was perplexed. She repeated, "Got religion every winter for the last ten years! I do not believe I understand. What became of your religion in the summer?"

"Laws!" she exclaimed in momentary confusion, "I don't know, but somehow it just petered out."

The church has too long encouraged backsliding by not cultivating habits of holiness and systematic religion. This poor backslider and thousands like her must be brought to see that man has his own part to perform in the working out of his salvation.

Spasms of praying or churchgoing, of living or giving, can never bring the world to Christ. We have trifled with God's business of world redemption. System, toil, and education have built earth's great structures. There are no short-cuts to Christian conquest.

"What's all this Centenary business about," said a non-Christian business man, "and what do you mean by 'giving the tithe'?"

When his question had been fully answered, he said: "That strikes me as a businesslike proposition." Then he added, "Do you know that we men outside of the church sometimes get disgusted at the way you folks conduct business?"

He was held by this new thought of a kingdom of God with a program of businesslike religion.

Later he said, "I guess it's time I signed one of those stewardship cards and joined the church."

III. GOING ON TO PERFECTION

It ought not to be difficult now to see the deeper significance of such a slogan as "A Million Tithers in Methodism." It is not merely an efficiency plan to finance the kingdom of God; primarily, it is a prophecy of the beginning of a great crusade for systematic religion. Think what it would mean if any considerable portion of professing Christians would consecrate their wills to the task of working out into holy life habits such slogans as "Make the Sabbath different," "Greet the Morning with a Prayer," "Honor the Lord with thy Substance and the First Fruits of all thine Increase." There are many other phases of religious life which might be listed, but these are enough for illustration.

Let just these three principles—the stewardship of time and prayer and possessions—be crystallized into life habits in any individual, and, like Daniel, he will reveal the power of God unto salvation. Let them be crystallized in the life of any congregation, and there will come forth a transformed church. Let them be crystallized in the life of American Protestantism, and there will result not only a redeemed nation but a reconstructed world.

The life of stewardship, in the last analysis, means an appeal to the will. Daniel did not leave the cultivation of his spiritual life to the hazard of convenience and feeling. "He purposed in his heart"; with determination he planned for his periods of prayer, just as every disciple must do if he really lives the life of prayer. Barnabas exhorted the new disciples at Antioch "that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." Doubtless he was passing on to them the results of his own experience. All the great saints bear the same witness—that progress in spiritual conquest must be dependent not upon convenience and feeling, but upon an unconquerable purpose to walk with God.

Systematic religion, it is evident, lies very close to the scriptural teachings of entire sanctification, and the "going on to perfection." Blessed is the man who has the divine discontent, who is hungering and thirsting for God. Robert E. Speer

says, "We ought repeatedly to confront ourselves with the inquiry, 'Am I a better and stronger man than I was?' That is what the Christian life is, a life of steady progress and growth. We are bidden to move on—to keep our faces set toward perfection. Christian character is a hunger for the highest."

"Ah, my God,
What might I not have made of thy fair world,
Had I but loved thy highest creature here?
It was my duty to have loved the highest;
It surely was my profit had I known;
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
He needs must love the highest."

But there is only one road by which men climb into these heavenly places with Christ Jesus: it is the road of holy habit where only the determined soul can pass. Yes, the determined soul who, knowing that the spirit of God waits the fixed purpose and the set face, cries, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4. 13).

Give to our Lord an army of such soldiers who, "in loving loyalty," will pledge themselves to holy covenants, such as "Keeping the Sabbath 'different'"—such as "Safeguarding the daily devotions"—such as "That proportionate giving, which acknowledges life partnership with God," and it will not be long before that great day will come when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our God.

VIII

If Millions Prayed

By W. E. Doughty

ALL pious people value prayer; most of them deplore their shortcomings in prayer. Why is this? Prayer is the communion of friends. Never can we get too much of it. Who can tell us about prayer efficiency? To him we listen eagerly—perhaps wistfully, almost tremblingly—slow to believe it is for us. But it is.—Ed.

TEXT: "*And when they had prayed.*"—Acts 4. 31.

IN that great New Testament book, the Acts, there is a passage with a thrilling message. It represents an irresistible combination of truths. It reveals the quality of spirit necessary for a conquering church.

"When they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake of the word of God with boldness.

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of *them* said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own" (Acts 4. 31, 32).

Can these experiences of the first century be repeated? What would happen if the millions in our church, if the millions in all churches, with the same vivid and compelling vision of Jesus Christ which these early disciples had, should really give themselves to prayer? Suppose we had faith enough and our prayer penetrated as far and deep as theirs into fellowship with Christ, what would be the outcome? Well, what did happen? It is no theory we face but an experience. The Scripture records five definite, concrete results. May we not with intensity and reality look for similar results everywhere when millions pray!

SHAKEN. "When they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together."

Nothing but a vision of God can do that. And they had it. They felt the burden of sin, they saw the wounds of Christ, they looked upon the mighty works of God.

The war has shaken the world. It has shaken the church too somewhat, but not enough. The church needs new and deeper manifestations of God to enable it to shake off the old age and put on the new. This experience of the early church was evidently no mild emotion, no simple pleasurable sensation, no gentle thrill, but a cleavage of soul that opened channels of vitality in their hearts to flood with crimson the life of our world.

That was a dramatic moment in a great irrigation project when a blast was set off which tore a hole through a mountain-side and let a river loose to reclaim a million acres from death. Prayer set off the blast that shook that Eastern world so profoundly that its life was riven and history changed forever.

Is this not what we need? Is it not such a new discovery of God, such a new obedience, such expanding plans and such a daring faith that new measures of God's power shall be released? We need to be shaken that choked channels may be opened, small channels widened and deepened, or new ones riven where none are now, channels big enough for God and big enough for this hour. "When they had prayed the place was shaken." Well may we all enter into the spirit of that impassioned prayer:

"Stir me, O stir me, Lord, I care not how,
But stir my heart in passion for the world.
Stir me to give, to go, but most to pray:
Stir, till the blood-red banner be unfurled
O'er lands that still in deepest darkness lie,
O'er deserts where no cross is lifted high.

"Stir me, O stir me, Lord. Thy heart was stirred
By love's intensest fire, till thou didst give
Thine only Son, thy best beloved One,
Even to the dreadful cross, that I might live:
Stir me to give myself so back to thee,
That thou canst give thyself again through me."

EMPOWERED. "When they had prayed, . . . they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

This is the central and indispensable experience of triumphant leadership. Never yet was a man filled with God who did not first pray. Prayer does not empower a man, God alone does that, but prayer opens the way, prayer cuts through the forest, prayer bridges or breaks down the barriers, prayer quickens the faith, prayer makes God real, prayer clarifies the thinking, prayer energizes the will, prayer gives God his chance. Prayer does not change God's will, but releases it. Prayer does not create power, but transmits it. Prayer does not increase the energies of the universe, but it puts on deposit with God energies which he releases to bless the world.

We face a task too big, too complex, too difficult for any but God-empowered man. Unless there is a clear and deep sense that God is here, that the work we do is the will of God, that the power of God is available for this task, how hopeless is our quest! When the millions pray they will be empowered.

We should all accept, I suppose, as a general working basis the following statement: All personal values center in Jesus Christ; all social ideas culminate in the kingdom of God. Yet there are hundreds of millions to whom the church has not carried with conquering power the personal Christ. If these hundreds of millions are to be sought and won, there must be a veritable avalanche of power in Christ-possessed personalities sent out across Latin and Moslem and pagan lands.

We believe, theoretically at least, in the adequacy of the gospel to meet modern social conditions, yet the three great social sins over all our world, still cry unto God. "The blood of thy brother Abel crieth" the sin of slaughter. The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah crieth—the unrestrained, unconquered passions of men. The cry of the reaper defrauded of his wages and his rights still comes up before God—the sin of economic injustice. The church must somehow get strength to cope with these forces which are struggling for mastery in our modern world. If, on the one hand, "the church," as one expressed it, "is to know what is going on in the tin-can

back in the alley," and, on the other hand, if the church is to win the whole world, we must find that path to power, that lonely road which leads into the hidden sources of God.

"When they had prayed, . . . they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

ENCOURAGED. "When they had prayed, . . . they spake the word of God with boldness."

Fear and timidity were swept away, and a Christ-inspired daring took the helm. We front a task requiring superb courage; it calls for nerve and daring of the highest order. Where shall we find them? When we think of the difficulties within as well as without the church, the indifference of millions, the narrow vision of many, even those who should be leaders, of organization and education and finance, we may well throw ourselves upon God. As we face the difficulties in our own local churches, prayer will help in solving our problems and give courage for the task.

We must be prepared to face many a battle, outnumbered a thousand or ten thousand to one, to march up to machine-gun fire without flinching. We must be patient but firm with those who worship the ancient ways of doing things; with those who do not hear the gales in the tops of the trees; with those who are progressive in everything else, but go slow or let well enough alone in the church; men who forget, as Professor Ross has so strikingly said in *The Changing Chinese*, that "Nowadays world processes are telescoped and history is made at aviation speed."

Do we not have in this experience the explanation of every new secret of initiative and originality? Prayer involves the highest creative functions of personality. These pentecostal outpourings which inaugurated new epochs were all preceded and accompanied by prayer, in some cases long periods of waiting upon God.

Here is the human secret of the Wesleyan Revival, of the great awakenings in India and Korea and other parts of the mission field. It characterized the Welsh revival and other great modern spiritual movements. It was the secret of the

leadership of William Carey which resulted in the beginning of great missionary movements in Great Britain. It was the same fire that burned in the souls of those Williams College students and at Andover, inaugurating the missionary crusade in America. To learn this lesson afresh under which, in 1902, the Young People's Missionary Movement was organized, go to the chapel of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York city, where the Laymen's Missionary Movement was launched, or out to Round Top at Northfield, or the hill-sides around about where prayer set on fire a group of college men who began the Student Volunteer Movements.

The modern task of the church requires vast stores of initiative and originality. Where shall they be found except as we press far back into the heart of God, where all the visions are born and from which come forth all the creative spiritual energies to redeem the world? The church is at the beginning of a new spiritual epoch if the church is obedient to the call of God. We dare not fail God in this hour.

UNIFIED. "When they had prayed, . . . the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul."

How such an experience would unify the forces within any one denomination! Nothing less than the burden of soul or a great task can unify us. Prayer is a great unifying factor. It creates favorable conditions. Nothing less than a deep and pervasive spiritual quickening can blend millions together.

How very greatly unity is needed in the whole Church of Christ! It is time that Christ's prayer in John 17 shall be answered. Surely, the needs of the world to-day demand that the united power of the whole church be brought to bear upon them. Have we not recognized the truth as stated by John R. Mott, "An unbelieving world is the price we pay for a divided church"?

The different communions are too often like a heap of sand. No mechanical pressure can unite the separate grains. Only fire can take a mass of sand and make it into material fit for a corner stone of the temple of God. Is this not one of our supreme needs, that we have such a burning passion for

Christ and world-redemption as shall fuse us together in purpose and program and service?

The war threw the nations into the veritable furnace of fire, and out of it came cooperation and action under a unified command on a scale never before seen. French were still French, British were still British, and Americans still Americans, yet they were "of one heart and soul." That was what saved the world.

In our day is not God allowing the church to go into a furnace of testing to prove again the reality of our Christianity by challenging us to lay aside our differences in obedience to the call of God and to go forward under a unified command to face our whole common task together?

CONSECRATED. "When they had prayed, . . . not one of them said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own."

The giving of money is the first test of consecration. No part of our Christian program is more spiritual than securing the money. Prayer is the greatest human influence in raising money. The present program of the church has all the elements in it that make victory possible. It is inclusive of all interests, home and foreign; it calls for deepened spiritual life; it opens up thrilling possibilities of missionary education; it involves a field campaign of great magnitude; it demands organization complete and inclusive; it calls for the enlistment and training of laymen on a scale never before possible; it is based on a survey which marshals all the facts and calls for adequate resources of life and money to meet these needs as a practical expression of the faith that God wants the whole task undertaken.

We are not afraid of a big budget, but we are afraid of a budget which is not big enough. We have no fear of a great organization, but we are afraid of not building an organization powerful enough to carry on the business. We are not afraid of the drive to secure the life and money, but we are afraid of that false mysticism which discounts using to the utmost the statesmanship, the brains and sagacity and tested business

principles which we profoundly believe God would have us use.

No such hour as this has ever dawned before for the stewardship of prayer, of life, of talents, of money. Are we equal to the emergency, and will we give and pray to the utmost that the church may succeed? This is the opportunity of a thousand lifetimes. We must do it! We will do it!

"When they had prayed, not one *of them* said"—All this because they saw Jesus Christ and understood the hour, God's hour, into which they had come.

"Show us thy face, O Christ, in loving kindness

Above the tumult of the world between,
Show us thyself and put away our blindness,
For we needs must love thee when we once have seen.

"Show us thy face, thorn-wounded for our healing.

O heart of mine, canst thou that crown forgive?
Those bleeding hands were for our pardon sealing
And thy soul fainted that our souls might live.

"Show us thy face, O Christ, that we may love thee,

For some forget, and some have never seen,
But there is naught we e'er can place above thee,
When once we see thee, beautiful, serene."

Well may we approach the vision and tasks of these days in the spirit of the psalmist as translated by Luther, "My soul in silence waiting all hushed for God."

IX

Concerning the Collection

By George Elliott

SOMETIMES a sermon leaves us satisfied. We find no fault, we feel no deficiency, we fear no failure; the gospel has been preached and it comes to us with finality. We do not think of resisting it. It is for us; we want it. To quarrel with such a sermon is to reveal our lack of virtue. We worship the God who has been revealed; we "know whom we have believed."—Ed.

TEXT: "*Concerning the collection.*"—1 Cor. 16. 1.

"CONCERNING THE COLLECTION!" What a seeming anti-climax to the great resurrection argument of the fifteenth chapter. Yet that chapter ends with a noble "Therefore." Doctrine always points to duty, and creed is consummated in deed. So, right in sight of the open grave of Jesus, Paul calls attention to the collection.

To many folks money is a tenderly delicate theme; their spiritual sensibilities are so sweetly seraphic that they forever soar above so sordid a subject! But, really, it is only very cheap folks who can be drawn to church by the notice, "No collection." God makes no apologies for talking about it in his Book, nor does his apostle Paul for exhorting concerning it. The church ought not to have to discuss finance, and would not if all life was conceived as stewardship.

GIVING IS A POSITIVE DUTY. Paul says: "I have given order." There is more said about giving than about praying in the Bible, and it is Paul, the apostle of freedom, who lays down the law concerning it. He teaches that liberality is a gospel grace wrought by the Holy Spirit in the redeemed nature (2 Corinthians 8th and 9th chapters); it is a grace, not a legal burden, a privilege even more than a duty,

and stands on the same happy basis as singing and praying. Yet, as we need rules for the best singing and praying, so we need instruction in giving; to give by rule is not a bondage but a useful discipline that braces and strengthens Christian character.

GIVING IS A PERSONAL DUTY. "Every one of you." Everyone can give, for gifts are various—time, talents, sympathy, etc. The man with one talent gives the Master much trouble, because having but one he is afraid to risk it. It is an evil in the church that so few bear its burdens, either of service or sacrifice; if all helped, all would become interested and all be blessed. Better ten one-dollar bills from ten people than one ten-dollar bill from a solitary giver.

GIVING IS A DUTY OF CHRISTIAN PARTNERSHIP "For the saints." It was a beautiful act of fellowship. We do not pay for what we personally get out of the church; we give that others may equally share in a common blessing. It is only by two great acts, prayer and gift, that every soul touches every other life in the round world.

GIVING IS A PERIODICAL DUTY. A weekly offering is commanded. The money is needed regularly and should be contributed systematically. This condemns all haphazard methods, all clap-trap schemes and devices for money-raising. Not by the fancy fair, the oyster supper nor the rummage sale can the tribute of the King be efficiently collected.

One might as well postpone all prayer to the end of the year as to answer God's claim on our means by writing one check in a twelve month.

It is not to be left to impulse. Paul does not want them to wait until his arrival and then have a big mass meeting, with rousing speeches, fervent appeals, and a big collection. Giving should be a part of the steady routine of our lives, a holy habit, woven in the web of daily and weekly gratitude to God for his unspeakable gift.

GIVING IS A PRIMARY DUTY. "On the *first* day of the week." All first things belong to God. Under the Law,

the first fruits of field and flock were offered—the first purple clusters of the vine, the first golden sheaf of the harvest, the first bleating lamb of the fold, the first-born of the family, every first of value.

God's claim to life and service is foremost—the first of time (The Lord's Day), of hours (the morning watch), of life (the first-born), of money (the first tithe). God's share is to be separated first for his service, before we use the rest for his glory. He is the first and preferred creditor of our lives, yet how many begin their retrenchment at the house of God! He gets the scraps and fragments of our fortune, not the choicest and best. He is made the meager beneficiary of our surplus, not the partner of all our business activities. In the assignment of our goods he only gets a "contingent remainder."

The first business transaction of the week should be the separation of the Lord's portion. The grace of liberality is to shine as a star of first magnitude in the constellation of our good works.

GIVING IS A PIOUS DUTY. The day of resurrection soon became the day of religious assembly for the early church. (Note the first appearances of the risen Lord, Pentecost, Paul at Troas, John on Patmos, etc.).

(a) *It is an act of worship*, just as essential as praise and prayer, and in some ways more real, for it expresses love, not merely in words, but in a loving deed. Let us give in the very place and at the time that we receive the divine blessing. The collection box entered the church of old at the command of God (2 Kings 12. 9), and Jesus, when he comes to his Father's house, sits over against the treasury (Mark 12. 41) and watches the contributions, as strictly as he does any other part of the worship. It is an old law of the sanctuary, "Ye shall not come empty-handed before your God"—it is an essential element of every near approach to the altar of sacrifice.

(b) *It is an act of loving gratitude*. "As God hath prospered." A puny faith breeds a sickly charity.

"What shall I render unto Jehovah for all his benefits. . . . I will pay my vows unto Jehovah,
In the courts of Jehovah's house,
Yea, in the presence of all his people."

God is the universal proprietor. He is the sole producer of wealth, all the natural factors of production are wholly of his ordering. "He . . . giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deut. 8. 18). "All things are thine," "All souls are mine" Ezek. 18. 4). "The silver and the gold is mine" (Hag 2. 8) etc. All industry has a religious background. Work is a sacrament; "to labor is to pray."

If men hate to have money matters brought into the church on Sunday, it is because they have banished the thought and claims of God from their week-day work. When our homes and workshops cease to be temples, then man begins to rob God in tithes and offerings. Our religion becomes like the stale, dead, crumpled rose leaf in the family Bible, not the fresh fragrance of every day's work. Make all life a priesthood, and the Sunday altar of sacrifice will be heaped with gifts.

(c) *Giving is Godlike.* He is the great giver, and redemption is his royal gift.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small."

Our failure in this duty is not primarily financial but spiritual.

(d) *The true motive.* Some give from necessity, some from habit, some from honesty, some from pride and self-righteousness, but at last we find the true motive in "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 8. 9.). Sacrifice is the law of the Christian life. Religion that costs nothing is of little worth. Have you ever given until you felt it? Only love's gift is counted at last.

GIVING IS A PROPORTIONATE DUTY. I have talked about giving, but, in fact, there can be no giving to God; all is his already—it is rather paying a debt. "The tithe . . .

is Jehovah's" (Lev. 2. 30). The separated portion is only an installment of God's rent.

(a) *The measure.* Money is merely an index of all sacrifice. It is stored up power to be put at the service of the King, like all other power. So liberality becomes in some sense not only the test, but the measure of our loyalty and love.

(b) *No hard and fast rule.* It cannot be stated in terms of arithmetic—a pigeon may count as much as a bullock. It is not merely the tithe, God often demands more than that. All, if need be, must be at his disposal, if the Call of the kingdom requires it. Sometimes he commands, "Sell whatever thou hast, and give" (Mark 10. 21). Our righteousness should exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. His challenge is, "What do ye more *than others?*" (Matt. 5. 47). The tithe system would give the church more than enough for its present demands. That point once won, it should be a springboard for a magnificent leap into the ocean of a boundless liberality.

THE DUTY IS LINKED WITH A PROMISE. "Prove me now herewith" (Mal. 3. 10). "He that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (2 Cor. 9. 6). "It is more blessed to give than receive." You gave a dollar and felt no joy—give a hundred and see!

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Giving to God is transferring our wealth to a heavenly ledger, is transmuting material things into invisible and eternal values.

This inscription is on an English tombstone:

"What I spent, that I had;
What I gave, that I saved;
What I saved, that I lost."

X

Faithful Stewardship

By George E. Farrar

WE dodge the side-stepping, indirect individual because time is valuable. We like to be the target of straight talk. Here is a terse, cutting statement of stewardship. You'd better spend half an hour on it, although it takes but ten minutes to read it. It takes a lifetime to live it.—ED.

TEXT: "*Who then is the faithful and wise steward?*"—*Luke 12. 42.*

GOD IS OWNER. Before the day when Jesus spoke the parable of the vineyard, from the earliest history of the human race, man has been accustomed to the requirements of stewardship. There has been a "rule of honor," and men have rendered oil, grain, wine, or some other substance of sufficient value for the use of property owned by another. This is a basic law of our economic system. The government levies tax, the lender exacts interest, the individual collects rent. This is paid as an acknowledgment of ownership. But above government, or corporate body, or individual, stands God. We have accorded to man the right of ownership, when in truth, he is only possessor and may be separated from his possessions at any moment. God is the owner and we have no record that he has ever given a quit-claim deed to any man.

MEN ARE STEWARDS, IF GOD IS OWNER. Stewardship implies and carries with it responsibility and accountability. There is much confusion on this subject as it relates to our obligation to God. Confused thinking has led to lax and inadequate practice, much to the hindrance of the kingdom and the crippling of the church. The adoption of a sound

scriptural principle of stewardship is an imperative need of the church to-day.

CHURCHES COST MONEY. "Salvation is free," we have been wont to say; and a very good sister said she knew it was free, because she had been a member of the church for twenty-five years and it had cost her only twenty-five cents. Too many of our people have acted on this belief, and the church, which is the divinely chosen instrument for the world's enrichment and for the blessing of man; the church, which is His holy bride, that has given birth to every tie, sentiment, and institution that we hold dear, and without which there would be no continuity of progress, stability of state, security of home, has become impoverished, a suppliant, a beggar, subsisting on human charity.

This is wrong if redemption is to come to the world. It was not thus in the beginning. God arranged for his church, "that in his house there should be meat and to spare"; in his Word there are no less than one thousand five hundred and sixty-five references to this subject of stewardship; and thirteen of the twenty-nine parables of our Lord treat of our relation to property. God owns all, and man holds all as a trust to be used for the redemption of the world. For this "God sent his only begotten Son," and for this we live and have talents and possess property. We are stewards to this end. The Christian does not question this, and yet our stewardship is inadequate and has been measured by our pennies.

"What shall I render unto the Lord?" We are not left in the dark: Praise, adoration, worship, heart, life, property. Yes! But how much of our property has been devoted to him? Investigation shows that we have turned into the church, for all purposes at home and abroad, less than twenty-three cents per member per week.

"THE TITHE IS THE LORD'S." From the beginning it was required. It is an acknowledgment of God's ownership. Paying it is an act of worship. Among the Hebrews none were so poor but that they paid the tithe. To God was set aside the first and the best of all the products of earth and of

all the works of man. It was the separated portion, "holy and sacred unto God." With it the work of the kingdom was carried on, the Levites were supported, the temple expense was met. But support did not stop with one tithe. The Israelites paid a second tithe which cared for the feasts and fostered the patriotic spirit; and a third tithe, every third year, provided for the poor. The temple, which for magnificence and grandeur was unsurpassed, was built, not with the tithe, but with the free-will offerings.

Yes, "the tithe is the Lord's." Not only the firstlings of the flock and herd, of the fruits of earth; but a portion of all time, of all treasures of beauty, of thoughts that invent, of hands that labor, of wealth of gold, of weight of stone, of strength of iron. It was required in the yesterday. We have passed from the old dispensation into the new, but no one will say that that has lessened our responsibility; rather it has increased it. Does God expect less of us than he did of the Jew? Surely not. He is sending his disciples to arouse his people to a sense of their obligations and responsibility, coupled with the great opportunity that is facing the church to-day. We have been singing, "My all is on the altar, I'm waiting for the fire," and we have wondered that there has been no fire; but if we consider that our all has been measured by pennies, we understand.

THERE IS A LARGER LAW than that of the tithe, but we cannot do away with the principle involved, there is no ingenuity of interpretation by which the tithe can be set aside. It is the basis for Paul's exhortation to "lay aside every week as God has prospered us." The "Tithe and Beyond" is the scriptural rule. The old Testament emphasizes the "tithe," and the New Testament stresses the "beyond." The Old demands the tenth; the New *demands* less but *expects* more. The Old said, "Thou shalt not kill"; the New goes further. It says, "Thou shalt not hate." The Old says "Thou shalt not commit adultery"; the New spiritualizes and says, "The lewd look is adultery." The Old says, "The Sabbath is the Lord's"; the New claims all days. The Old says, "The tithe is

the Lord's"; the New says, "He that forsaketh not all is not worthy of me." This is a hard saying, but it puts God first.

ARE WE GIVING? How many are treating God and his church as a charity—playing the principal, the benefactor, the philanthropist; acting as if God, and his kingdom, were a dependent, a beggar, a ward, hanging on human generosity? How many are "Cainites"? Everything else first—luxuries, whims; and what is left, if any, is given to God. I recall the Lord of the vineyard when he came to claim his own and the fate of the careless steward. God's work is not secondary. We must eliminate the idea of giving when we place our contributions in the treasure of the church. This idea of giving breeds selfishness. There is really no giving until the tithe has been paid.

Can there be any blessing and spiritual growth, any real comradeship to the one who lives as one of God's vineyards that yield five hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, or one hundred thousand dollars and yet gives to the church, to carry on the vital work of the kingdom, a mere pittance—"That which he could just as well do without"? Yet Methodism, with all her numbers and all her wealth, has not reached the standard of twenty-three cents per member per week.

After a century of missionary education and propaganda, out of her nearly seventeen thousand churches, only seventy-three pay for missions as much as one cent per day per member, and only two hundred and thirty-three have reached the standard of five cents per week per member, and not a single church pays as much as twenty-five cents per week per member for the world's redemption.

The Methodist Centenary is making the call for a million tithing stewards who will consecrate themselves and their all, and by this act of worship put God first and make uppermost the interests of his kingdom.

XI

Clearing the Way to the Highlands

By Jacob Finger

"I WANT to do as I please!" snapped my little boy. So say we all. There is a way up; but we would go another. He is learning, in games, beating the drum with the band, gardening, etc., that "it's no fun if you don't play fair." He is "clearing the way to the highlands." The way is easy afterward.—ED.

TEXT: "*The earth is Jehovah's, and the fullness thereof; The world, and they that dwell therein.*"—*Psalm 24. 1.*

1. DOES the average Christian believe that the earth is the Lord's? He does. Even the man who does not call himself Christian believes it. The Lord is the Creator of the universe, and all things are his. That is what the psalmist meant when he said, "for he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." The world is his because he founded it.

2. Does it always appear that men believe? It appears that the earth is man's. The cattle on a thousand hills, the metal in the earth, even nature's forces are now claimed by man. Our claims for God appear fine theories. If the earth belongs to man, we should repudiate God's claim; if it belongs to God, we must act differently.

3. What is our relation to God in regard to property? The kingdom of God is like a certain householder who called his stewards together and intrusted them with his property. If the earth is the Lord's, we are his stewards. He has intrusted us with the earth.

A steward does not own: he administers and renders an accounting. We need to draw a sharp distinction between ownership and stewardship. We no longer admit that might

makes right. To-day we are coming to feel more and more that property brings obligation, for we recognize our stewardship of property. We are administering for God; we do not own.

WE ARE STEWARDS WITH PECULIAR POWERS. We can withhold. We must choose. It is within man's power to withhold himself from God, and he passes from that to withholding property that rightfully belongs to God. But if we are to measure up to our belief, our administration must express the idea of stewardship.

If we are only possessors and managers, is it possible that there should be no definite understanding as to what part should express his ownership? Even though we may differ as to the proportion, that there should be a proportion all must agree.

Some say that a tenth of our income is God's. They go to the Old Testament and show that the Lord ordained this system and that it holds to-day. Some object that it is impossible to tell what is one's income. Every business man knows once or twice a year how he stands. There is a difference between not being able to compute one's income and not allowing the claim at all. If I am unable to say what my income is, it becomes my duty to find out. For if it is the Lord's, I have no right to it.

Supposing an earthly ruler demanded a tenth of my income, or my life. Would I be able to tell what my tenth is? How many would dare to come into his presence and bring as excuse the inability to find out what it is? Life is too sweet to risk it. I would say: "I am not quite sure just what my tenth is, but on my honor this is at least a tenth. I feel sure it is more, but I assure you it is not less."

Is it Mosaic? Other Christian people declare the law of giving to be a Mosaic law, and as such, Christ did away with it. But, pray, what law did he bring into effect? The idea of stewardship is more clearly emphasized in the gospels than in the law.

Let us not discard it because it is Mosaic. I find a Mosaic

law where we are told not to steal. Has Christ abrogated that? But, you answer that is in the Ten Commandments. Our discussion can be based on the Ten Commandments. What if we should discover that this part is God's and we have not given it to him—does not that same commandment apply to it?

To ransack the Scriptures to find out which law was abrogated and which not, is pharisaical. But I desire to go back of the law. There is a difference between saying that a law is enacted because there is a demand for it in human life, and saying a thing is prohibited and wrong just because there is a law. The fact that a cannibal law gives a human being a right to eat another does not make it right. The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" does not make killing wrong. It is wrong in itself, and that is why a law of this nature came to be a law of God and man. It is against the very nature of God and man, it is out of harmony with God's character, and gradually man is coming to recognize it.

AMOS SPEAKS OF THE TITHE as though it had been an old established law in Israel. References are made to times even older than Amos, as though tradition dated it back to the very earliest times. Traditions do not come into existence and become established in a day. It was in the very consciousness of the people in early times. It looks as though there was a Mosaic law because it was a settled conviction in the minds of godly men, sanctioned constantly by God, that this part expressed the thought of God's partnership in human life. When men first began to come directly under Jehovah's tutelage, the conviction was that giving a tenth was right. Jehovah approved. It was right in itself. Hence it became a law, a statement of the way in which God deals with men.

WE WILL APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE. No one has ever been impoverished by giving a tenth to the Lord's work. And church finances have been a scandal to the kingdom. The churches that have adopted this stewardship plan have not only revolutionized their finances, but the spiritual life also has been quickened as a consequence. Can we not reason back

and say that, since no one is impoverished, each one could give that much? In withholding this portion we are actually robbing the kingdom of Christ; and even the Ten Commandments cover this case. If we can give and do not, we covet.

On what basis is a law ever abrogated or fulfilled? When a certain person came to Jesus to inquire about the great commandment, Jesus told him there were two—love to God and love to man. With this in mind we decide whether a law has been abrogated or fulfilled. Will our obedience to that law increase our usefulness in the kingdom of Christ? It will; so it must be fulfilled. How is the law of tithing fulfilled, when it is left out of consideration, and the financial obligations to the church left to a mere whim?

JEHOVAH REQUIRED ISRAEL TO GIVE A TENTH to his work. To love him, they needed places of worship, and money to support them. Now Christ has come and a new régime has been ushered in. We have not the priests nor the temple and sacrifices as they had. Has the obligation ceased? Not a jot or a tittle. Has love to God and man ceased under the new dispensation? How has the obligation been fulfilled?

Israel was then getting ready to be the messengers of redemption. They were in school under Jehovah's instruction. Salvation of the world was of the future. They left the Gentiles alone; they were not ready for a universal work. And yet a tenth was required.

JESUS GAVE THE CHURCH A COMMAND to evangelize the world. Will anyone tell me how, with the added responsibilities of world evangelism, with all the increased problems to solve, with all the added needs of men and money, this command has been fulfilled? Laws are fulfilled in their observance. From whatever angle I reason I find that our standard cannot be lower than the Mosaic.

IF WE ARE STEWARDS, God's part cannot possibly depend on our personal expenses or feelings. If I owe a human being a tenth, I must pay him whether my personal expenses are more or less, whether I have sickness or not.

If money is not mine, it matters not whether it belongs to God or man; I have no right to use it. We find there is a little more money if we like the cause, and like the man who presents it. That is because we lack system, and our giving depends much on feeling. No human steward can discharge his obligation after this fashion in dealing with a human landlord.

THE TENTH MUST BE OUR MINIMUM giving to God. If it took a tenth to carry on the work of Israel in isolation, shall it be less with our world vision of redemption, less under grace than under the law?

We are not told that it is not fair. And this species of argument is sometimes peculiar. A preacher was once walking home with his leading layman, a man over seventy years of age, and rated in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"That was a great sermon," remarked the layman.

The preacher's heart thumped, for he had preached on tithing.

"But," continued the layman, "that is all right for you, for you are getting only eight hundred a year; but think what it would be if I had to do it."

God pity such Christianity! He acknowledged the righteousness of it. He did not want his preacher to hold back the little intrusted to him; but he justified himself in the fact that he had much. It is wrong to steal a little, but right to steal much!

THE POOR MAN SAYS: "It is easier for a rich man to give a tenth, for he has more left." Use the same argument against the observance of one day in seven. But you do not, because the custom is universal, and it has been discovered that a man can earn more in six days than in seven. The Lord makes up in health and length of days. O man of small means, remember that God can provide. Your Father will make up to you so liberally that your receiving department will be unable to handle it. Why should you miss God's blessings and promises because you are poor? We all might use the tenth, but none of us can afford to lose the blessing.

PROPORTIONATE GIVING. Here is where there should be proportionate giving. The tenth marks the acknowledgment of God's ownership of our life. He furnishes life, strength, wisdom, opportunity. Have a care when you are tempted to hide behind the grace of Christ and in so doing, repudiate his ownership. Remember that on what one has left rests the obligation of proportionate giving. The proportion is judged by what you have left and the need of the world. A man can neither squander nor hoard what he has left and throw it in the face of God that he has given a tenth, and God has no further claim. The earth is the Lord's; there is an obligation on what we have left.

We are either to repudiate the claim that the earth is the Lord's and we are stewards, or act according to our belief and return to him this acknowledgment of his ownership. The man without a system of any kind, if not defective, is ignorant or criminally negligent.

TITHING AND EFFICIENCY. Assuming that systematic giving is obligatory, let me turn the subject a bit. Let me show you the efficiency of the tithing system. The membership of a church in New York State is over one thousand. Two hundred and sixty-five tithers paid three fourths of the budget of fifteen thousand dollars. More than seven hundred thirty-five paid one fourth. Suppose they all tithed—

Is there a man who feels the force of this sermon, who sees his duty? Face it, and give the Lord what is his. Dare to trust God. You will not go to the poorhouse—and if you should, better be honest in the poorhouse than dishonest at home.

If you do not see your duty clearly now, it is your duty as a Christian man to make the subject a matter of prayerful study. You should put forth an honest endeavor to find the truth about it. What if you should discover that you actually rob God? Do you truly acknowledge that "the earth is the Lord's"? Are you a faithful steward?

XII

The Pay Check and Religion

By Walter R. Fruit .

THE pay check is the reservoir in which we store our yesterdays, ready to be used on our to-morrows. Hidden away in this bit of paper is a portion of our past—and it bears heavily on our future. The value here stored makes us glad, yet puzzles. How shall it be used? It is personality in a trance; to what shall it be awakened? Better consult the Partner.—ED.

TEXT: "*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*"—Luke 12. 34.

ONE of the most frequently overlooked fundamentals of religion is the relation of the pay check to spiritual life. The first impulse, which often becomes a deep conviction, is that there is no relation between a man's pay check and his spiritual life; or if there be any relation, it is detrimental; the less a man pays out of his pay check for religion the more spiritual he becomes; while the more he pays out the less spiritual he becomes. This is a mistake. Let us consider for awhile the reasons for believing that God is deeply concerned in our pay check, and that his concern is for our own good.

I. THE PAY CHECK AND MAN'S BEST. Because so much of the best of a man goes into the production of pay checks. Some one has said, "The pay check is the man." This exaggerated statement has much meaning when one considers how much of a man goes into the production of pay checks. The best years of his life are in them, the years between sixteen and sixty or seventy. The best hours of the day are in them, those between sunup and sundown. The best strength of the body is in them, the vigor between youth and old age. The best efforts of the brain are in them, following the hours

of sleep. Now, unless God has a share in the pay check, he has no real place in all these "bests" of a man. One of the supreme questions should be, How can these "bests" of the man be made to honor God and to increase the worker's life? There can be but one answer to this question: Let God have first consideration in the pay check.

2. THE PAY CHECK AND OUR PARTNER. The pay check is the product of a partnership, and that partnership should be recognized. "I had no partnership, I did it alone—my brains, my hands, my farm, my business, my materials—where does the partnership come in?" This is a frequent and thoughtless declaration. "I have made my contribution to my pay check. Who is my partner and what is his contribution?"

Whenever you say "I," please remember that the "I" is God's contribution to your pay check, for God only can contribute the imperial "I." "My brains"—who made them, you or God? "My hands"—did you or God make them? "My materials"—did you make them or did God? One by one you can take these proud claims and find that God is the major contributor to the success of this partnership. In fact, Jesus teaches that we are stewards of God.

A professor in an agricultural college, and a business man in a city, each in his own way, came to the same conclusion: that man contributes five per cent of the energy, and God contributes ninety-five per cent.

There are three attitudes you can assume toward God, the Major Partner in the distribution of your pay check: 1. Pay God nothing; 2. Give God a donation according to your whim or the impulse of the moment; 3. Pay God as the major contributor such an amount as he himself may indicate. If you were the major contributor, which attitude would commend itself to you as the fairest one? Thank you, I knew you were honest. Remembering that those qualities which make for friendship between man and man make for spirituality between man and God, we can see the spiritual value in the proper distribution of the pay check. We are honest with God, and honesty is always a condition needed for friendship.

3. WHAT IS A FAIR DISTRIBUTION of the pay check between the partners, God and you? Suppose you let the Major Partner suggest. You naturally turn to his Word for his suggestion. Thoughtfully you should turn the leaves, for you should remember the ninety-five per cent and the five per cent. You find the tithe, or tenth, is his suggestion as the basis for distribution. God contributes ninety-five per cent and asks ten per cent as his share. Only a great partner could afford to do business on this basis. But God is both a great and a good Partner, and blessed is the man who acknowledges the partnership and has fellowship with the Partner during the long days and years consumed in producing pay checks.

4. YOU HAVE SEVERAL OBJECTIONS you desire to urge? First, the tithe is a law, and we are under love, hence the tithe is not binding upon us. You should remember the tithe is only the beginning, it is never the final goal. Just as you begin by giving God the Sabbath, and then a part, or the whole, of other days, so you begin with the tithe and, as he prospers you, you pay him more. Too frequently "love" is used as an excuse to pay less. The spiritual condition of one who uses love as an excuse to do less than the tithe is illustrated in the following story:

Once upon a time a bachelor went to a certain town and inquired for a boarding house. He was told that Widow Allen kept the best boarding house in town. He made arrangement for board and room at the rate of five dollars per week in advance. Each Tuesday for many weeks he paid his five dollars per week in advance as agreed. By and by Cupid got busy, and the bachelor and the widow were married. When Tuesday after the wedding came, the time to pay his board, our hero came to his bride and said: "When I was under law I had to pay you five dollars per week in advance; now I am under love, I do not think I ought to pay so much. I think it would be better to leave a dollar on the table when I feel like it." Can you get away from the conviction that love ought to do more than law?

The second objection sometimes urged is that the tithe is

not commended by the Master. Please turn and read the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. Jesus is hurling his invectives at the Pharisees. In that whole chapter we find that he commends them for just one thing, they tithed: "This ye ought to have done." Jesus approved the tithe.

5. PRINCIPLE OR LAW. The tithe is not so much a law as an expression of a principle. Laws change, but principles, never. The principle is, First things are put first. The pay check represents so many "bests" of a man. Unless God is first in the pay check, can he be first in the life? If the landlord, the grocer, the clothier, and others get first consideration, and God gets what is left—if there is anything left—could God really be first in the man's thought? "First things first." Is God first when he is second or third or fourth? When God is first he is put first. God's demand for the "first fruits" was more than a law, it was a principle. To make sure you are putting him first, pay him your tithe.

6. A TESTIMONY OF THE FAITH. The tithe is the best visible and tangible testimony of your faith. Much of your testimony is in spiritual language. Spiritual truths are spiritually discerned, and the world understands little. The world does understand the pay check. When the world sees you pay to God the first and best out of your pay check, it knows you believe your confession. When you were selling Liberty Bonds, the man who talked about "the glorious flag," and bought no bonds with his money, never could convince you he was a patriot. The world tests our religion by the place it has in our pay check; and it has a right to do so.

7. THE FAMILY BUDGET. Nowhere is this testimony more convincing than in the home. The children see their father go to work in the morning, see him return after a long day, and know that the father's great work is to produce the pay envelope. Around the supper table on Saturday night it is opened. The first goes for rent, then the grocer's share is counted out, and so down to the last, when a few pennies are given them for Sunday school and a small sum goes into the

church envelope. If the grocery bill is unusually high, then the church envelope is forgotten. The family prayer that evening has little value to those children, for they have seen God forgotten or counted out.

What a contrast on those children's mind when they see God's share counted out first and held sacred! Whoever else may go without, God never does. The family prayer that night is heard, for the children have seen God put first in the family life. This truth alone should answer the question: Can a man with a family tithe? Can he afford not to tithe if he expects his children to believe his confession of love for God?

8. "YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN; for ye were bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6. 19-20). The price was Christ's own life. You are anxious to show him how you love him for this great service. You have told your love to the world. Now show your love by the consecration of your tithe to him. Others are doing it; what others are doing you can do. The Master says, "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12. 34). Push your treasure out ahead of you toward God, and see how your heart will follow your treasure toward him.

XIII

Stewardship Is Spiritual

Col. Elijah W. Halford

STEWARDSHIP is hard to define. It has to do with the living. One plus another is not the sum of the two as they were, but as they become. Life is a movement; we are forever becoming. So stewardship is not like the plan for a building, where fixity is a virtue, but like the rules for a swiftly moving game, where the relations and values are constantly changing. "And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully."—Ed.

TEXT: "*For as he thinketh within himself, so is he.*"—Prov. 23. 7.

MEASURING STEWARDSHIP. Stewardship is not a thing to be measured by so many prayers, or by so many hours of service, or by so many dollars in money. It is a conception of the mind, an attitude of spirit, that dominates and consecrates all of life, and from which these other things naturally and inevitably flow. One may say prayers, be very active, and give largely, and yet be far from stewardship.

TESTING STEWARDSHIP. There is much talk at present of acid tests. An acid test of stewardship is the attitude and the spirit in which the economic questions now threateningly pressing, and demanding individual and corporate action, are met and considered. Nothing is more vital than the whole range of issues involving the relationships between men and society and government, and nothing more imperatively demands from the Christian Church sympathetic study and treatment.

DEFINING STEWARDSHIP. A stewardship of life defined or practiced in terms that seem to restrict it to a man's

relation to God is very like cant. There can be no worthy stewardship that does not embrace a man's relation with all other men, individually and corporately. The necessities of human society and of government compel interrelationships: no man can live unto himself. These relationships must be recast. It is worse than folly—it is criminal—to attempt to go ahead in the old way; praying as the English prayer book has it, that “God will keep us content in the conditions in which we are placed,” and living in a fool's paradise that he will or can do so. England is finding out, and the world is finding out, that “conditions” will not remain as they have been and humanity continue content. Mr. Lincoln said this country could not continue half slave and half free, and neither this nor any other country can continue unless not only political but economic autocracy is overthrown, and a social and industrial system inaugurated whereby all men shall contribute according to their ability to the needs of society, and the rewards of all labor, whether by hand or brain, shall be justly and equitably distributed and enjoyed.

STEWARDSHIP ELIMINATES CASTE. Dr. Buckley said a very pregnant thing long ago, in *The Christian Advocate*: “Caste is the fruit of monarchies. Shall it ever be the infirmity of republics?” That means more than at first blush may appear. There are other monarchies than political, and monarchical evils may be bred in republics. Caste and class, everywhere and of every kind, are doomed. The war settled that—but how? The great achievements during the war were made possible because of the new spirit born in the fires and through the perils of that portentous struggle. For the industrial world Charles M. Schwab spoke the new social note when he said, “I have never had a man work for me: I have had thousands work with me.” Theodore P. Shonts recently wrote me, in answer to a note calling attention to the courtesy of a train attendant on the Interborough, “We are always glad to receive commendations of the service of our business associates.” These two expressions indicate the spirit that must come more and more into the ways of economic

life. It is God's way. He never asks men to work for him, they are invited to work with him, and to become associates, coworkers.

"LABOR TROUBLES" are not to be composed: The new social order is not to be set up by men glowering at each other from hostile camps, and putting their wits and force against each other with truculent intent to see how little can be given, how much may be exacted. The new era will not come by any short cut. "There is no royal road to social salvation. Neither will governmental machinery and organization itself accomplish the purpose. What we must decide is our own attitude toward life. Do we wish other men and women should enjoy the same opportunities that we desire for ourselves and those belonging to us? And if so, are we of the opinion that it is our duty to work in order that this may be secured?"

HERE IS THE CRUX of the whole situation. The Centenary has said that the world cannot be made safe for democracy unless democracy is made safe for the world; and, therefore, the principles of Jesus—justice and care for the other man—must be preached until they are made regnant in human life and governments. It is the same with a final solution of the vexing and threatening social and industrial problems. The only safety is in the spread of the principles of a stewardship of life that will bring about the general acceptance of the Golden Rule—"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." A "stewardship" that is less than this is not Christian stewardship.

XIV

God or Mammon?

By Ernest A. Miller

LIFE is one decision after another. "Choose ye this day," is the greeting of every morning. The clear preacher helps us to make right choices. It is eternally true: "He who hesitates is lost." Great truths are stated in few words, easily understood. If you are hesitating, these short sermons will help you to decide.—Ed.

TEXT: "*Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*"—Matt. 6. 24.

THE text has been variously translated. "Ye cannot serve God and money." "Ye cannot be bondservants both of God and of gold." Very clearly the point is that there's no compromise between the mastership of God and of money. Man cannot indulge a double service. He has but one homage to render, one crown to give. Not only is polytheism a sin; in reality it is an impossibility, and even so bi-theism. We have to be satisfied with one vote in the matter of life-rulership. There are many men in the church to-day who are striving to make unto themselves a graven image, part God, part gold. The object of worship turns out to be all brass. We serve God wholly or else we do not serve him at all. It is God or mammon, never God and mammon: a clear-cut alternative, rather than a duality or a composite.

A LOVER OF GOD MAY BE A MAN OF MEANS. The holy utterance is not, "Ye cannot have God and money." The question is one of service or worship, not one of possession. God makes some men with the acquisitive faculty. If they did not make money, they would be dishonoring him. The man who made "other five talents" pleased the Master: the man who might have doubled his one talent came under severe

condemnation. It is a good rule to make all the money you can, economically and morally good.

THE SNARE IS IN THE MONEY-PILE. It is not an easy thing to refrain from loving the heap of your own hands. Money has a subtle and sinister habit of taking the reins and the whip out of its owner's hands and driving the owner. The man himself would probably scorn the notion that he is the slave of the dollar, but the simplest test reveals the ugly fact. The final count of his life lies in his gold-pile. Every question that faces him is settled according as it will mean addition or subtraction for his metal god. Yes, it is possible to make money, to hold money, and still take orders from God, but the competition is keen. The philosopher apostle was shrewd when he wrote: "They that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil; which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim 6. 9-10).

ONE DOES NOT HAVE TO OWN A PILE IN ORDER TO LOVE MONEY. Let it be remembered for the caution of the poor man. Indeed, it is possible to serve mammon and not have a farthing. The imagination of many a poor man makes gleaming piles for him, and he falls down and worships. A single dollar may be handled as fondly and followed as servilely as all the gold of Midas. Judas lost his soul over thirty pieces of silver. A young man, penniless but greedy, may choose his lifework solely from the dollar standpoint. Mammon is his God. A parent may keep his children from school because their labor will make him a few extra shillings. He is a lover of mammon. It is not always the size of this gold god that incites one to fall down and worship: it is an inward spirit of covetousness that consumes the soul, and this may happen with or without the external object. The other fellow's money may seduce us as well as our own.

IS THERE A SAFETY ZONE against the vicious insinu-

ations of money? How may a man be rendered immune against its subtle dominations? Can the imagination of a poor man be cleaned and the soul of a rich man be secured against the machinations of wealth? Honest men do not mean to fall a prey to mammon any more than the man of the first glass intends to become a drunkard. But oftentimes both succumb ignobly. Where's the safeguard? How can a man perpetuate his first good resolutions? It is certain that mere human determination will not suffice. The lure of Mammon is stronger than the will of any man, and when they come to conflict, the will of man invariably goes under. Nor can one make sure of holding money in subjection by observing the formalities of religion. Many a Bible-reading, praying, churchgoing man takes final orders from his bank account, consciously or unconsciously. Nor will charity of itself save a man from his money. Frequently a profiteer salves his conscience by a gift to charity, and seeks license to prosecute nefarious schemes to build up his beloved mammon. Even calculating tithing will not save a man. The tithe has no intrinsic merit. Unless it be the outward expression of an inward grace it is *nil*. One tenth of man's income for benevolent purposes can never sanctify the nine tenths used for miserly purposes or for diabolical self-indulgence. True tithing is but a symptom of utter consecration.

BY THE SURRENDER OF HIS MIND AND LIFE to the true philosophy of life and property is a man saved from mammon. The fundamental position in this philosophy is that God is the author and owner of all life and all things. I am his, he created me, he gives me the means of sustenance; my faculties and powers are the result of this power and grace; apart from him I am nothing, and can do nothing. The external world is also his; he made it and holds it in being; without him all would go to smash. Money represents certain values, but those values inhere in the Divine. And yet God calls me to work with him. He furnishes all the instruments and elements. With this conception of life and things it is natural for me to regard myself as the honorable servant and

partner of the Most High. Money has no more dominion over me, for it is not mine, and if I should be intrusted with any money-values, the obligation of proper administration is always upon me. No imagination, no material thing, is able to break through the true stewardship idea and ideal. Whether rich or poor, man is safe from the subtleties of money when the holy relationships of God and man and property have taken hold of him.

GOD'S PREFERRED CLAIM

IN THE DAYS OF PINCH most folks are obliged to curtail expenses at some point. There is a testing temptation to Christians to cut down, or entirely withdraw, their church contribution. "Honest debts" take precedence of the voluntary religious offerings, so they say. The logic is plausible, and the action has the appearance of justice, even righteousness.

Any who contemplate such a step would do well to read again the story of Elijah and the Zarephath widow. The famine had struck her and her little son. The prophet found her gathering sticks to dress her last handful of meal with her little oil. She expected they would eat these and then die. Elijah commanded her to make a little cake for him first, and afterward make for herself and her son. This required utter faith, but the woman did not fail. And because she was true the jar of meal did not waste, and the cruse of oil did not fail, until the day that Jehovah sent rain upon the earth. Elijah was the prophet of God: he stood in the stead of God. The widow lost nothing by making her offering to God in her time of stress, and making it first. Rather, she made a profitable investment.

"DO I OWE ANYTHING TO GOD?" You may ask. The reply is, You owe everything. Our debt to God is a very real one. Have you personal qualities that admit you to society? Thank God for them. Have you endowments or acquirements that you trade for gain? It is God's bounty. Have you faithful friends and a peaceful home? God is the

giver. Without your heavenly Father you would not even have a place in life, not to mention your countless blessings.

THE OBLIGATION TO GOD IS A MORAL ONE. No writings have been drawn. The divine hand does not have you by the throat with a "Pay-me-what-thou-owest" demand. The charity of God "doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil." God's debt is like our debt to mother. She has given her very life for you beyond the giving of any other human friend, but she has never demanded of you an I. O. U. or a promissory note. But, for that reason, will you disregard your obligations? God forbid! Nor can you ignore your debt to God. He was your first and highest creditor, and his claim should be a preferred one.

The argument is not that you may absolve yourself of this very real debt by money alone. But the significance of money must not be overlooked. To the average man, hard-working and frugal, money is always life, and more so in the pinch of penury. Do not discriminate against God by withdrawing your money subscription from the church. Make a little cake for God first. Of course God wants more than your money in hard times and all times. Your debt to him includes worship and human service. Worship is a spontaneous expression of love for God. The heavenly Father yearns for your fellowship. Take time to be acquainted with him.

THE BEST WAY TO SHOW YOUR LOVE TO GOD, some one has said, is by being kind to some of his other children. We pay our debt to God when we serve our fellow-men. God has intimately identified himself with mankind in the gift of his Son. Especially at the cross, God and man come very close together. Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me." Mary worshiped God in quiet communion with his Son, Martha in busy service.

WE OWE SOMETHING TO OURSELVES, and to our own folks. The widow of Zarephath was allowed to make cakes for herself and her son. We honor God by self-im-

provement, and please him when we provide for those whom he has given to be with us. But there are no cross-purposes between us and God. We rise or fall with God and with others. Exalting God we are lifted up; helping others we help ourselves. Consecration contributes to character. True freedom comes from unselfish service. Paying our debt to God, we enrich ourselves. No man ever lost by sacrificing for the sake of the kingdom. The woman in question became rich through faith and sacrifice.

Nor have we spoken of securities for the future. Supposing this woman had refused the man of God. Who would have provided for her in the dark day of absolute poverty, and in the darker day of her son's fatal illness? And who will provide for you if you cut God off now? It is glorious to know that we can secure the future, in peace and plenty, by being true to God in the present. Both in this life and the life to come we shall be safe if we prefer God's claims.

If God's laws will not lift us to the reasonable and sanctified level of the first-fruits for him, when the harvest is scarce, mayhap his example would. God never thinks of himself first. He made the world for us. He fills it with good things for us. When man was bankrupt through disobedience God gave his Son for our redemption. Even our refusal of the great gift does not divert the stream of God's blessings. God lives for us, and although he owes us nothing he gives us everything; owing him everything, shall we not, at least, give him our first and our best?

A NEW VERSION OF HOLINESS

THE TERM "HOLINESS" is not in good standing nowadays. It is the same with "entire sanctification." Both of these terms have seen better days. Both of them are Wesleyan and both scriptural. John Wesley declared the purpose of his societies to be, "to spread scriptural holiness over these lands." In the Old Testament we read: "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO JEHOVAH" (Zech. 14. 20). And in the New Testament both of these above-named terms occur very frequently: "Perfecting holiness in

the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7. 1) ; "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly" (1 Thess. 5. 23) ; and many other passages.

But in spite of their noble extraction these words lie in disrepute to-day. A man who wears them is regarded with suspicion. And there are some good reasons for the declension in meaning. The devotees of the doctrines represented by these terms are most to blame for the malodor of the words. Too much stress has been laid upon the phrases themselves and too little upon the underlying experience. The mere utterance of these terms, and other stereotyped and sanctimonious expressions, has passed for real piety in the minds of some modern Pharisees. There has been considerable prating about absolute and sinless perfection which has amounted to little more than a rant. There can be no doubt that these faddists have talked too much and practiced too little. Holiness is not a profession so much as an outshining life. Sanctification evinces itself, carries its own guarantee in fragrant everyday living. These theorists have promised largely and delivered with stint. Some of them have promised pure white, and lived gray or jet black. Furthermore, some of them have been very exclusive and censorious. According to them, there can be only one right way, and that is their way. They make no allowances for different temperaments, nor for freedom of judgment. They are brothers to the street-corner Pharisee of an earlier day, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men" (Luke 18. 11). They are likewise his brother in superficiality and unfruitful legalism.

THE OLD EXPERIENCE of heart purity and cleansed lives, thanks be to God, has not faded out. Only a new language dress is needed in this twentieth century. A word is never more than a shadow ; the idea is the essential thing. We may dispense with a word, if needs be, without letting go anything of experience or life. One thinks of the word "pacifist." Five years ago it was a perfectly respectable term, even an enviable name. Now no one cares to be named a pacifist, without explanations and understandings. And yet

the old idea of antimilitarism is as alive and as commendable as ever.

A NEW WORD HAS ARRIVED to take the place of "holiness" and "entire sanctification." The word is "stewardship." It connotes all that these other terms ever connoted. It too is scriptural and Wesleyan. Paul says, "Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4. 1-2). One of John Wesley's leading sermons is entitled "The Good Steward." In this sermon we read: "A steward is not at liberty to use what is lodged in his hands as he pleases, but as his Master pleases. He is not the proprietor of any of these things, but only intrusted with them." The term "stewardship" has glorious hints of meaning not found in those terms which must be discarded for a time because of insincerity. Stewardship implies humility and service. The business meaning of stewardship is trusteeship; a trustee must never foster the price of ownership in his heart. Also, a steward does not live for himself, but for others. His working philosophy of life is altruism. No one can be worthy of God's trust, and a blessing to others by his own gifts, unless his heart is pure, unless he is holy or sanctified in the true and original sense.

There always have been folks who have led holy lives, truly experiencing entire sanctification. But these have not been saved by pretty phrases, or tied to empty forms of expression. I have no doubt that many persons of pure hearts never heard of the terms "holiness" or "entire sanctification." Their concern is living—living in tune with the Infinite. Yet we need an adequate term for this blessed life. Sometimes we would testify of the glory in our lives. That adequate term is "stewardship." May we know its deep meaning in our hearts and never dishonor the name!

XV

The Kingdom Is Coming •

By Claude S. Moore

ONLY as man is becoming is the kingdom coming. The kingdom is for living men, those who are becoming. If man reaches a stationary state of perfection, the kingdom will cease to be. Death will have overcome. The kingdom consists of a living God ruling living men who choose to be his stewards. The kingdom is coming now.—Ed.

TEXT: "*God's steward.*"—*Titus* 1. 7.

THE CALL OF OUR LOST HUMANITY has at last been heard by the church. The stewards of God are awakening to the supreme importance of building his kingdom in the earth now. The church has caught the vision and realizes the necessity of right relations with God. She is now in the process of making that adjustment.

It has become manifestly apparent that God has a well-defined program for the race of men. And it is no strange thing if some have failed to grasp the meaning of the mighty issues involved in the purposes and plans of God for his world. But this hour is signally opportune for ministers to clear the atmosphere on the truth about the privileges of sonship and the obligations of stewardship.

GOD HAS CALLED MAN INTO PARTNERSHIP with himself in the building of his kingdom. It is easy for Christians to think of God as the Creator of worlds. He made them all. As Creator, he never sold to man the work of his own hand, but he has given him possession and use of the earth upon which he lives. As possessor man will acknowledge God's ownership in certain ways.

We accept with deep gratitude the expression of God's love

in Christ's sacrificial death for our salvation. By this we are adopted into the family of God. Do we not then owe to him the deepest love of our hearts and the highest service of our lives?

When man acknowledges God as his Creator, and takes his son as his Redeemer, and joyfully accepts the responsibilities of stewardship, he is practicing life on its highest level. This means real partnership with God.

THE KINGDOM COMING. God has demonstrated his ability to create, sustain, and govern worlds. He is no less capable in establishing, building, and ruling his kingdom on the earth.

Man is no stranger to the idea of empires. But the story of Babylon, Egypt, Rome, and the modern world clearly reveals that man alone is a failure as a builder of permanent kingdoms. A divine Partner is essential. The plans are furnished by the Senior Partner, and are suited to every need of man's highest nature and the best interests of society.

To interpret correctly the mind and movements of the Master the human partner will need to talk with him about them. This means prayer, and will result in the disciple catching the vision of God for a lost humanity, the passion of Christ for man's redemption, the power of the spirit for victorious conquest, and the endurance of the Saviour for the joy that is set before him. Yes, it means for man a symmetrical personality, through whom God will reveal his infinite wisdom and exercise his divine power.

THE EXPENSE ACCOUNT. Having entered into an agreement with God concerning the terms of partnership and having caught the spirit of real kingdom-building, the Christian gladly meets another requirement by underwriting his share of the expense account. This act is in harmony with the provision made by God.

Everybody knows that money, time, talent—our all—are necessary in sustaining God's work.

Now, if it is true, that Russia would have been saved from her present ruinous conception of human liberty had the

church paid a million dollars per annum for the last twenty years to teach her people the gospel of true liberty, then there are substantial reasons why somebody should do some serious and conscientious thinking.

In order to classify our human interests, would it not be well to figure our accounts and know what amounts we spend for God, for our necessities, for our luxuries? It requires only a little of this kind of honest dealing to arouse the conscience, quicken the mind, and stir the heart into action.

THE TITHE. Every Christian should assume his share—at least a tithe of his income—for the service of Christ. A tithe—you say—why a tenth, any more than some other portion?

Because it is the only amount ever named by God to his people. "The tithe is mine." "It is holy." Jesus declared that he did not come to destroy the law, but to fill up every law of God.

Did not Paul say, "Separate a portion"? He was an ardent follower of the law, and as an intensive Christian can you imagine his doing any less under grace than under the law? His whole thought is more, "According as God hath prospered him." No slipshod methods were used—God first, always.

This is in harmony with New Testament teaching on the subject of giving. Zacchæus gave half his goods, and where he had wronged another he restored him four-fold. A certain widow who exceeded all law, except the law of gratitude, did not stop to figure out her share, but cast in everything she had, and the Lord praised her for this act.

By separating a portion one opens an account with God. This is businesslike. It also becomes an act of worship and makes God a real factor in the life of the individual. Have you tested the divine plan? Have you brought all the tithes into the storehouse? Why not? "Bring ye!" "Prove me," saith the Lord. There are thousands of Christians, and hundreds of churches, that can give praiseworthy testimony concerning the blessings resulting from such practices.

TWO THINGS ARE NECESSARY for man to do in ad-

vancing the kingdom of God—give himself and give his money. If the church would lay her tithes and thank-offerings on the altar of God, and accompany them with intercessory prayer, the vast spiritual resources of the mighty God would be released, and result in the clarion note that would sound and resound around the world—"Behold the Lamb of God"—crucified, risen, living, loving, forgiving, and—bless God!—reigning.

THIS IS A GREAT TIME in which to live. God has signally honored our beloved church in the hour of the great world crisis by calling her to adopt his program. The church is responding with such holy fervor, enlarging faith, deepening love, and commanding influence, that the conquest is assured.

This is the time to examine our hearts and lives, to measure our resources—material, mental, moral, and spiritual—and to consecrate them to the service of man and God.

The kingdom of God is coming. Will you share in its glory? Will I? And in that great day we shall join in saying, "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, *be* the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever."

XVI

Personal Accountability

By J. Wesley Oborn

ACCOUNTING is recording things as they are. Only the facts enter into an account. The most honest thing in the world should be an account. Personal accountability is being liable for the truth. If we've gone wrong, it is ours to say, "I have sinned." If we've done well, it is ours to render the account, and—that's all. We have nothing more to do, but take our medicine. Another will attend to the rewarding. This sermon will help us to think it through.—Ed.

TEXT: "*Render the account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward.*"—Luke 16. 2.

WE SELECT this text, not because of its setting, but for the statement of personal accountability which it contains. There never has been a time in the history of the church when personal responsibility was as keenly felt as at present. This is largely due to the world war and to the Centenary World Program of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

GOD OWNS—? We have been accustomed to saying that "God owns everything"—then we gathered together all that we could get our hands on and used it as we pleased. Many a man has filled his barns full to overflowing, then said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry." Then the death angel knocked at his door and said: "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" (Luke 12. 19-20). There are no pockets in the shroud. The only way we can take anything into eternity is by exchanging this world's goods for the currency of heaven before the messenger of death calls us to give an account of our stewardship.

MY COUNTRY. During the last two years we have learned many lessons of ownership which we will not soon forget. How well we remember the "meatless days" and the "wheatless days" and how we managed to get along with one small spoonful of sugar for a whole meal! Then as though that lesson were not severe enough, there came the order, "Give an account of your boys," and we will never forget how with breaking hearts we placed upon the world's altar the choicest of all our treasures.

If the sacrifice our boys made is not to be in vain, the Church of Jesus Christ must pour out upon the altar for a sin-cursed world her treasures of prayer, of life service, and of gold. We were not slackers when our country called for sacrifice, and we will not be slackers when God calls upon us to sacrifice for his kingdom.

THY KINGDOM. We have had the great commission for nineteen hundred years, and yet not one half of the world has heard of it. A few years ago it was the custom to pray for "God to open the heathen doors," but that kind of praying is out of date now. Our great embarrassment now is that the doors are open so wide and the Macedonian cry is so loud, while our workers are so few and our funds are so inadequate.

It does not seem possible that a great God would create this wonderful universe and make such ample provision for everything in it, then call into existence such an important institution as the church and make no adequate provision to carry forward its work. All who are familiar with church work must acknowledge that thus far her financial program has come far short of her responsibilities and opportunities.

TIME. God has made ample time provision for the church. He has set apart one seventh of our time as the minimum for his service. Christians everywhere acknowledge this, and know that the church could not exist without this wise provision. Many Christians not only give the Sabbath Day to Christian service, but devote hours and days during the week to the work of the church. When John Wesley, preaching to the colliers of England, told them that they must not dig coal

on Sunday, they pleaded that they would starve if they did not work seven days out of the week. They did not know that, according to God's economy, they could dig more coal in six days than in seven—if they gave God one seventh of their time.

TITHE. We have tried all sorts of man-made schemes to run the church financially, from oyster-soup and chicken-pot-pie to spasmodic giving, but it has not been a howling success. The same God who said, "One seventh of your time is mine," also said, "One tenth of the increase of the land is mine." As the seventh of our time is our minimum for service, so the tenth of our income is our minimum for giving. As some give hours and days of time in addition to the Sabbath, so many should give thank-offerings and peace-offerings in addition to their tithe.

A PLAN THAT WORKS. Some one asks: "Would the tithe system give the church an adequate support?" Yes, and it is the only plan that will. According to government statistics the per capita income in the United States is \$500 per year. Methodists are at least an average class of citizens, so that our per capita tithe should be \$50, or \$200,000,000 per year for the Methodist Episcopal Church. We have been giving for all purposes about \$50,000,000, or \$150,000,000—less than our tithe. "Will a man rob God?" How can we as a church render an account of our stewardship with such figures staring us in the face? How paltry the Centenary askings of \$105,000,000 in five years look, when we face our actual ability!

NOT A HARDSHIP. Some one else asks: "Would not the tithe as the minimum be a great hardship to many?" Not any more than the keeping of the Sabbath is a hardship. The same God made these laws, and as a man can do more work in six days than in seven, so his nine tenths will go farther if he gives the one tenth to God than if he keeps the whole ten tenths for himself. It is the universal experience of those who have honestly tried it.

A MISSOURI STORY. Some time ago, in northern Missouri, I was speaking along these lines to a congregation when a man, who had been sitting with a cynical look on his face, spoke up and said: "We have an exception in this town. A man, who has a wife and five children, was a tither until the prices went up, and he had to quit tithing. How will you answer that?"

I said, "Not having all the facts in hand, it would be unwise for me to pass judgment."

He settled back in his seat with a look of victory on his face.

That evening I was speaking in the same church and on the same subject. I made the appeal for the people to step out on God's promises and trust him, for he would surely take care of them. I had noticed a man and his wife sitting near the front.

As I made my appeal he said, "I would like to see the man who could keep my family of five children on my salary and give a tenth of it to the Lord."

I recognized the connection at once, that he was the person referred to in the afternoon. I told him I would like to see him at the close of the service. He tarried and I said to him, "So you were a tither at one time?"

He replied very emphatically, "Yes, sir."

I said, "How did you get along when you were tithing?"

He replied, "O, fine. Was buying a home, and did not have any trouble to meet my payments, but when prices began to go up we just had to quit tithing."

I asked, "What was your salary when you were tithing?"

He replied, "One hundred dollars per month."

"I asked, "Was your salary increased?"

He replied, "Yes."

I asked, "How much?"

He replied, "To one hundred and thirty dollars per month."

I said, "And you quit tithing?"

He replied "I just had to."

I asked, "How are you getting along now?"

He replied, "I am having a hard time and can't even meet the payments on my property." At this point he and his wife

turned and slowly walked away. The incident needs no comment, except to say that God and the smaller salary amounts to more than the larger salary without the blessing of God upon it.

HOW IT WORKS. Wherever you find a church in which a goodly number of the members have had faith enough to step out on God's promises in the matter of Christian stewardship, you will find that God has literally fulfilled his promises in pouring out blessings "until there shall not be room enough to receive them."

I have in my possession a letter from a minister in Missouri in which the writer tells of his recent experience in Christian stewardship. October first he became pastor of his present church. He found a debt of one thousand three hundred and fifty dollars for current expenses. They added this amount to their current budget, expecting to be that much in debt at the end of the year, if not deeper.

But something new happened to that church. The pastor put on a stewardship campaign in December and closed the second Sunday in January. This was covering the holiday season and with the "flu" conditions about as bad as anywhere in the country. In the face of these obstacles they secured twenty-five per cent of their paying members as tithers. On the first of February they had all debts paid and over one hundred dollars in the treasury.

THE SPIRITUAL EFFECT. Better than this great financial victory was the spiritual uplift which came to the church. During the four months from October first to February first they had one hundred and twelve additions to their church, and the pastor said, "They are coming every Sunday."

AN INDIANA STORY. Nineteen years ago I was appointed as pastor to our church in Dunkirk, Indiana. I found a church debt eighteen years old, also a debt for current expenses. They hadn't had a revival for many years, and the membership had been torn to pieces by quarrels. So far as I could learn, they had never paid their benevolences in full.

The Epworth League was so dead that they had not had an election of officers for two and a half years.

After I had been pastor of this church for about four months there came a mighty conviction to my heart that I should preach on tithing and organize a "Tithers' Band." I would about as lief have gone out into the woods and punched a hornet's nest as to undertake this task. The conviction became so deep that I finally told the Lord that while I did not believe it was the thing to do, I would do it. I prepared my sermon, but did not announce it in advance; was afraid it would scare the congregation away. After preaching as best I could, I said, "All who will join with the pastor in bringing at least a tenth of your income into the church and place it upon God's altar, stand up." I was afraid to look out over the congregation, but hearing a commotion, I ventured to look, and to my joy I saw that about ten per cent of the membership were standing, representing all classes from the richest to the poorest. We finally secured nearly twenty per cent of the membership.

BY-PRODUCTS. There were many remarkable experiences connected with this work. Marvelous results came to the church. At the end of the first year we paid all of the current expenses in full; we paid one dollar per member for missions and all of the other benevolences in full, and I went to Conference leaving seventy-five cents in the treasury as a nest-egg for the next year. During the second year we spent freely in fixing up the church property, and paid for it in cash. We paid the old debt on the property, and hunted up all of the old accounts in stores and paid them—some of them were old enough to be gray-headed. We always had money for local charity work, and did considerable of it. We paid all the current expenses in full. We again paid one dollar per member for missions and all of the other benevolences in full, and I went to Conference leaving two hundred dollars in the treasury as a nest-egg for the next year.

Better than the financial victory which came to the church was the great spiritual awakening. From the time I preached

the sermon on tithing to the end of my pastorate there was not a month that we did not have conversions. The Epworth League became so alive that they planned and conducted a revival in which the Leaguers did all of the preaching and had a number of converts. To this day it is one of the most spiritual churches in the Conference. The district superintendent, in his report at the last Conference session, said that this church was the first one in the district to go over the top for the Centenary.

THE SALVATION OF METHODISM. Our Sunday school superintendent, who was one of the wealthiest men in the church, became an enthusiastic tither. He is still one of the leaders in the movement, and instead of becoming impoverished I understand that his tithe is double what it was when I was his pastor. When we shook hands at the close of my pastorate there, he said: "I want to tell you something before you leave. I have been giving a tenth of my income easier than I formerly squeezed out twenty or twenty-five dollars per year." Then he made this prophecy: "I believe that the time will come when the tithe system will represent the salvation of Methodism." Surely, that prophecy is being fulfilled in the great Christian stewardship movement of these days.

XVII

What Is Your Life?

By George Clarke Peck

WHAT is your life? A jolly girl asserts, "A joke." A preacher solemnly says, "A great reality." A genial lady pronounces it "An agreement." A philosopher muses, "A magazine of mighty possibilities." A puzzled one calls it "A question." And ■ harassed soul declares, "It is hell." James said, "A vapor." Each defines it for himself. Life is what you make it, and the making is best in youth. How do you define it?—Ed.

TEXT: "*What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*"—Jas. 4. 14.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE? One might imagine that James had been making or watching the mirror-test. Of course, I cannot say that such a handy method of determining the presence of life in an apparently breathless body was employed in James's day; but his figure of speech suggests it. "What is your life?" he asks; and then answers, graphically, "Ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." I was in a sick-room recently, where they had just used a mirror thus. The pilgrim's journey seemingly was over. No pulse, no motion of chest, no flicker of eye. But on 'the mirror, which the nurse held close to the patient's lips, there spread a tiny film of vapor. And how they fought for extension of the hope that raised its head with the appearance of that momentary cloud on the glass! One might easily fancy that Saint James had watched that experiment made, with his own heart in his mouth and his own breath almost stopped. "What is your life? For ye are a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

So we come to the question with which we started, the pungent question of the brother of our Lord, "What is your

life?" And I say that the answer of James is too small. Sometimes, indeed, we are even a vapor, "that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." One often feels that evanescence in sick-rooms and cemeteries. James might have written his answer across the blood-drenched fields of France and Flanders, where, indeed, lives were wiped off, by the hundred thousand, like flecks of moisture on a glass. Ah, but that is merely part of a just description, for those same wiped-out lives in their transience helped do a great thing. They helped alter the stream of history. They made earth a different place for the ages to come. "A vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Yes, but in that vanishing vapor, as in tiny clouds and diminutive puffs of steam, lie potencies undreamed until their liberation. Sometimes life is robust with the strength of God. And sometimes it is sinewy with all tenacity of eternal purpose. And always it is pitched to immortality. Let me speak in such terms to those who have life to use.

LIFE IS SACRED. We cannot hope to take the best *out* of life except as we invest it with sacredness. As I sat beside a woman in the hospital, she fondling her first-born, I found myself trying to differentiate the new light in her eyes. It was more than gladness, though it was obviously that. It was more than wonder, though it was touched with that sort of solemn surprise. Despite its frustrations, and our sins against it, and our mawkish sentiments concerning it, maternity is easily the first wonder of the world. But the light I beheld was softer and holier than the light of surprise. It was worship. That morsel in her arms was a veritable shrine. Forgive her if, for a few days, she pours all her adoration at that altar. And then God help her to invest that growing life with sanctity for the child as he grows.

One day a group of collegians were bearing on their shoulders up the aisle of the college chapel the body of a classmate. And a drawn face came close to the boys to whisper, "Go reverently, for you are bearing the temple of God." So the bereaved father thought of the dear body of

his son. Even the housing of that precious life seemed sacred now that the boy was dead. I wonder if the life so housed had seemed sacred to the father, while "the child was yet alive"? And I wonder if that now stricken father had taught the boy to think of life as sacred? I wonder if the father had learned to think of his own life as a sanctity?

To hold life venerable: that is one part of the "fear of the Lord" which is the "beginning of wisdom." Never could we take our lives where we sometimes take them, if we held life sacred. Never could we treat life as we often treat it, if we felt toward it as toward an altar. 'Tis the sanctity of life itself that lends sacredness to its holiest experiences. Work is a hallowed thing, because the life which expresses in it is holy. Love is an ark of salvation, when life is at its flood. Friendship is the call of the Divine from temple to temple. And the altars of the church command our reverence, because life gets its tone and touch of sanctity there. Let life be anything and everything except sacred—interesting, industrious, enjoyable, and what you will—and life has lost its seal and significance.

LIFE IS A TRUST. It is never given; it is merely intrusted, as I commit my treasure to my friend for his safe-keeping. And when I commit my treasure to my friend I do not expect him to reach the pass at which he imagines that he *owns* it. I shall want it back; I shall expect it back. Meanwhile I am asking him to guard it for me. So with the life which God commits to our care for a season—twenty years, or three score and ten. He does not give it outright. He merely intrusts it. And woe betide the man or woman who violates the trust. Our courts, backed by the best sentiment of the commonwealth, hold in special detestation, and visit with condign penalties, the violation of a trust-fund. We can be patient with a horse thief or a burglar or a highwayman sooner than with a custodian of money or confidence or love who plays fast-and-loose with his commitment. And I do not see why we should expect even a pitiful God to wink at misuse of life.

LIFE IS A "CROWN-LAND," the courtesy of whose use

is accorded us by royal bounty. Not for any special grace or desert on our part; chiefly, as a token of the King's great heart. God never passes title to any part of his possessions; least of all, to the life he grants. He gives us the use, but he holds the title. Life is a crown-land, patch of our Father's wide domain; a bit of immortality on which to try our fidelity and skill, a few acres in which to grow either wheat or tares, either apples of Sodom or "fruits of the Spirit." What we grow in the crownland declares the sort of lease-holders we are.

LIFE IS A TREASURE FOR INVESTMENT. It is never enough to keep it; you cannot, in any adequate sense, *keep* it unless you invest it. This was the fatal mistake of the unfaithful servant who buried his lord's pound. I have never believed that he gave the real reason for his conduct. Of course he blamed his master, as we always incline to shunt off to others the blame for our failures. That is the most unusual man who can stand up and confess judgment upon himself without apology or self-pity—as David did when, without a single excusatory word, he whispered, "I have sinned." Ah, David, David, I behold thy greatness there, as truly as in thy deepest songs, or in thy dreams of a temple. Very different was the unfaithful servant in the story. He had not the grace to say he was sorry except for himself. Or, despite his inexcusable remissness, he might have been forgiven, even if he forfeited the pound. He evidently fancied, if he may be credited with considering the matter at all, that 'twas to *keep* his pound undepleted and snug. But every such buried treasure defrauds its real owner and the world. No vital important part of life can be kept—apart from use. God loans it for use. And unless we use it he takes it away. You cannot keep strength in your arm unless you use it. You cannot keep sight in your eye unless you look. You cannot keep an artist's skill in your fingers unless you paint or play—or do some other beautiful thing with your fingers. The penalty for disuse is to forfeit. "Take from him the (uninvested) pound," said the owner of it.

THE CHALLENGE IS ALWAYS TO THE HIGHEST USE. In the parable the nobleman who owned the pounds gave the amplest reward to the best investor—and was called hard names for it. But no other sort of master of life is a worthy master. Life poorly invested, life spent in pleasure and vanity and commerce only, is but a step removed from life uninvested. God insists that we put life to the maximum use—the holiest use. He demands the fullest return, both for his sake and for our own. When Tissot turned his wonderful brush from the painting of nudes to the portrayal of Jesus, he simply reinvested his gift in a better bank. When Mozart declined to lower his talent to the cheap tasks of the crowd, he was merely reserving his talent for the largest return. When the man who afterward became Bishop of Uganda realized the unfairness of playing with life, he turned a new page for the Dark Continent. When Theodore Roosevelt set his face like a flint to certain public ideals, he sowed for a harvest of appreciation such as has been granted to few of his countrymen. And when you and I——?

But I need not prolong the list of examples. Suffice that I call attention to the shame of investing life poorly. Merely to earn dollars for yourself with your commercial talent; merely to win popularity when you might be winning hearts to your Lord; merely to get through the world with a good name and clean record, when there is so much kingdom-work to be done; merely to “dream and drift” when you might, if you would, dream and drive—this is a tragedy for the soul. Sang Browning, once, “I count life just the stuff to try the soul’s strength on.” We cannot justly try our strength on easy tasks. To thy best, to thy best! Insist that your life be so invested as to yield the maximum return. Only so can you hope to hear the divine “Well done.”

BUILDING MATERIAL. Just one further answer to James’s question, “What is your life?” I reckon that life provides the material of which we build for eternity. Even heaven is no gift—though the “gift of God is eternal life.” Heaven must be earned. Heaven must be built from life here.

As a shrewd African once said, in my presence, "The Negro loves to hear about heaven as a sort of celestial compensation for the hell of being black." I can understand the yearning. Nearly everybody likes to dream of "getting even" when all the days are done. And that is the way I have heard heaven preached, mostly: as an evening-up place for those who had been sick or persecuted or lonesome on earth. Heaven must be infinitely more than that if it is worth going to. It is not primarily a recompense. It is a result. It is a fruition. It is the final beautiful dividend on a well-invested life. God does not *give* heaven to folks to make them happy; we must take happiness with us if we expect to speak the heavenly language. God does an unspeakably finer thing than to promise to give us heaven; he offers us the material out of which to build heaven as stewards of his manifold mercies.

XVIII

Stewardship: The Faith and the Practice

By Harris Franklin Rall

ONCE in a while we want a big banquet, a filling feast, with large variety, tempting new things, and an abundance of our old favorites. From such, served systematically, in due course, we turn satisfied, comforted, strengthened. That is the feeling of the editor upon reading this sermon.—ED.

TEXT: "*My Father worketh even until now, and I work.*"—*John 5. 17.*

NO SINGLE aspect of the Centenary Movement promises more for the future than the stewardship campaign. It is a great achievement to raise a hundred and five millions; it is a greater achievement to train a whole church in large vision and true ideals. The words of our Lord given in our text belong upon the lips of every disciple, and they give the meaning of Christian stewardship as—faith and practice.

I. THE FAITH

"MY FATHER WORKETH UNTIL NOW"—that is the faith of a Christian steward. There is a new movement that is stirring the Christian world to-day. It is not simply that men are giving more and working harder; they are seeing in a larger way. Three points mark that newer vision: (1) the thought of God as the toiler, the servant, the dweller with men; (2) the thought of a world that is being redeemed and a kingdom of God that is coming; (3) the thought of life as fellowship in service.

THE THOUGHT OF GOD is at the heart of this faith. That is at the heart of all faith. Whenever a new impulse of

life has come to men; whenever a new spirit has stirred the church, it has sprung from some larger apprehension of God. And men have caught a larger vision of God to-day.

(a) It is so easy to think of a God afar off. We put him back in history, and talk of how once he made this world, and how once he wrought for the help of men. We put him up in the heavens and think of a holy God far removed from our human weakness and sin. But what we need is to believe that the God who was in Christ reconciling the world is to-day walking the streets of men, and blessing little children, and entering human homes, and living in human hearts.

(b) *God works.* We have summoned men by crying, "Ye are workers together with God." Now let us stir men's hearts by telling them, "God is a fellow worker with you." I take the words of Jesus as one translator has put them and say, "My Father worketh unceasingly." We are not alone when we truly love, toil for truth, serve or sacrifice. Our God is a working God. His arm smites wrong, his strength assaults evil, his indignation burns for the helpless, his might overthrows the oppressor. He suffers with sorrow, and it is his compassion that stirs in every ministry of comfort. Where brotherhood to-day is overcoming suspicion and hate, where truth is driving out the darkness of ignorance, where freedom is coming in state, and justice in industry, there our God is working.

(c) *And our God serves.* We should hardly have ventured to say that once. Our thought of God was of a being of power and glory before whom men could only fall upon their faces. The power is there and the glory, but we have a better understanding of what this power and glory are. Jesus showed that long years ago, but we did not see it. Our eyes were dazzled with the pagan idea of kings who sat in state and wielded selfish power. He walked the streets of earth in peasant garb, the Friend of little children, the Companion of humble men and women, the Servant of all that had need. And men had the courage to say, "God is like that." If we really believe it—if, indeed, God be like that—then our God is the great Servant. We mean that when we call him Father, for where are there

any servants on earth like mothers and fathers? The God who serves! How should we dare to say it if we did not know Jesus Christ? How dare we say anything else if we really believe in him? The world which he has shaped for us, the patience with which he has waited for us, the great purpose that he pursues on our behalf, and the last great gift which he offers when he gives himself—what is all this but the sign of the God who serves? "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

A NEW VISION IS IN THIS STEWARDSHIP FAITH OF THE WORLD; our world is in the making, and its goal is the kingdom of God. It is out of the thought of God that there comes this new realization of the world. It is still for us the world of sorrow and sin that our fathers knew. We know its forces of evil. God is in this world and it belongs to him, and he has a great purpose for it.

(a) *This is a world in the making.* The method of God is growth. One day is enough to turn a man from sin and give him a new purpose and a new heart, but one day cannot finish the making of the man. That is true in a far larger measure when we look at God's world.

(b) *Consider purity, freedom, and justice*—the three great issues that are facing men to-day: First, how shall we have a clean world free from the curse of alcohol and drug and social vice? Passing a law counts only as it registers the fact that the people know and are willing to act. And even then the larger task begins, to make clean and strong a nation's inner life. Second, freedom is at its dawn, for freedom can never come with mere revolutions and constitutions. It is present only where a people have moved up the long hard way to knowledge and self-control, to cooperation in effort and devotion in service, to a real life of brotherhood. The third issue makes it even more clear, that this is a world in the making. The burning question of our time is how we can secure justice in industry.

Who is there that believes to-day that it is God's purpose that the wealth of the world shall belong to the few—often to their undoing—while multitudes hunger and ask in vain for a job that will insure a decent human life? But through what long years we have come to this knowledge!

(c) *The kingdom of God* is the goal of this world in the making. The purpose of God is the redemption of the whole world, and the Christian Church dare not consider a lesser end. The rule of selfish competition between man and man, between nation and nation, must give way to an order of fellowship and cooperation. When his kingdom comes, men will say "Brother" when they work as to-day they say "Brother" when they pray. Disease will gradually disappear. Poverty will be banished. And back of all this will be the rule of the spirit of Christ in the hearts of men.

THE STEWARDSHIP OF LIFE. We have spoken two great words in our stewardship creed: "I believe in a working God"; "I believe in a coming kingdom"; and here is the third—"I believe in the stewardship of life." That follows from what has gone before. If this be a God-deserted world, then our great longing must needs be to escape and be with God. But if what we have considered be true, then life on earth takes a new meaning and holds for us a glory that we had not dreamed. To give our life to God, to share the life of God as he offers it to us—fellowship—that is religion. But men have failed to see what this life is that God offers. They debate whether it is not a man's first business to save his own soul. There is just one first business for man, and that is to open his heart to the life of God. To save our souls is God's business, to let his will be done in us and through us, is ours. "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6. 33). Religious selfishness means death: He that would save his soul shall lose it.

Fellowship with God means stewardship. This God whose life we share is a loving, serving, redeeming God; and fellowship with him means sharing such a life. There is a communion with God in quiet meditation and in the feelings of

holy peace. But if God be this working, serving, saving God, then we cannot share his deepest life except as we know such service. The message of Lowell's poem, "The Search," is still true.

I followed where they led,
And in a hovel rude,
With naught to fence the weather from his head,
The King I sought for meekly stood;
A naked, hungry child
Clung round his gracious knee,
A poor hunted slave looked up and smiled
To bless the smile that set him free;
I knelt and wept; my Christ no more I seek,
His throne is with the outcast and the weak.

The God whose fellowship we desire will be found by us in the service of men. We are to learn from him the glory of serving and giving, which is his own life. And in it all we are to rejoice as those who enter no uncertain conflict, but know that, as sure as God is God, so sure shall there come at length the new world which he has planned.

II. THE PRACTICE

"MY FATHER WORKETH"—that is our faith as stewards; "and work"—that is our practice. It is this side of stewardship which is most often treated, and so we can consider it in a briefer compass. Indeed, we can touch only upon two or three aspects of this great matter.

(a) First, stewardship in practice is as broad as life itself. Here we must guard against errors that are more or less common. Stewardship means far more than the practice of giving, and the basis of stewardship is more than an Old Testament precept. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. The foundation of stewardship must be our thought of God himself, our faith. The whole of our Christian life is a stewardship. Neither the seventh of our time nor the tenth of our money can express the Christian ideal. Our whole life must be a partnership with God, a partnership whose important concern is the making of the new world.

Let us apply that to our daily vocation. It is easy to think of minister or missionary as a steward of God's treasures. But why should not teaching and medicine and law become a divine calling? And what of manufacture and trade? How shall the world be redeemed if men do not take God in as Partner in these affairs? Especially is that needed in the realm of business. It is well that men of business give of their profits to God. It is splendid to hear of a man who definitely sets himself to make money for God. But there is a still higher ideal, and that is so to organize and conduct industry that it shall express the righteousness of God and the brotherhood of man.

It was an epoch when last year a group of Christian employers (Friends) met in England to counsel together with just that end in view. They said this notable thing: "We believe that it is only in as far as those engaged in industry are inspired by a new spirit, and regard industry as a national service to be carried on for the benefit of the community, that any general improvement in industrial relations is possible." Something of that larger ideal has been before us in these years of war; why not carry it over into the great enterprise which is now on. the effort to bring in the triumph of justice and peace? "I could name twenty leaders of American business and industry," writes one of its editors in a recent Century article, "who at this moment hold it within their power to determine the course of industrial relations in this country for the next twenty-five years. Twenty men who could change selfish competition into a large-visioned cooperation, twenty men who might bring democracy and justice into industry." That would be service for the kingdom of God as true as any work of bishop or preacher, and that would mean more for God's plans than the gifts of countless millions.

The art of giving can be considered only briefly, as one side of the practice of stewardship. We have learned the power of money rightly used. We are learning the meaning of cooperation. We have learned to lay the stress not upon the gift itself but upon the right practice of giving. And, above

all, we have emphasized rightly the need of systematic giving and the giving of a definite proportion. Much has been done by the suggestion of the tenth as a minimum proportion for our giving—repudiating the appeal to the law.

I may close with the reference to the words and example of Wesley, here as in so many respects far in advance of his day: "Your way lies plain before your face; if you have courage, walk in it. Having gained, in a right sense, all you can, and saved all you can; in spite of nature, and custom, and worldly prudence, give all you can. I do not say, Be a good Jew; giving a tenth of all you possess. I do not say, Be a good Pharisee; giving a fifth of all your substance." (Wesley probably refers here to the fact that the strict Pharisee recognized that the Old Testament enjoined the giving of two tenths and not simply one.) "I dare not advise you, to give half of what you have; no, nor three quarters; but all! Lift up your hearts, and you will see clearly, in what sense this is to be done." What he himself did appears in one of his sermons, though he does not mention his own name. Speaking of the Methodists at Oxford he says: "One of them had thirty pounds a year. He lived on twenty-eight and gave away forty shillings. The next year receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two and thirty. The third year he received ninety pounds and gave sixty-two. The fourth year he received a hundred and twenty pounds. Still he lived as before on twenty-eight; and gave to the poor ninety-two."

XIX

Who Dares, for the Christ?

By J. Homer Slutz

SUCCESS: Get your facts, organize them, make plans, schedule the work, do it, claim the reward. Simple, isn't it? But one essential is omitted: Find competent counsel. This is where the fellowship with the Father comes in. It is a part of stewardship, and of success.—ED.

TEXT: "*Ye are not your own.*"—1 Cor. 6. 19. "*Choose you this day.*"—Josh 24. 15.

IT WAS A NOTABLE WEDDING. The mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus himself was present. He was then standing at the very threshold of his manly ministry. And in the midst of the festivities the wine was gone.

Now, of all places where things ought to run smoothly and where it is painfully apparent if they do not, it is at a wedding. See the anxious looks on the faces of the guests. What will happen? Who will meet the emergency? Who but Mary! That social, sensitive soul had caught the spirit of the occasion and, in recognition of the authority lodged so securely in the face of her son, she turned to the hesitating servants and confidently said: "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2. 5). In that pointed sentence, Mary struck the keynote of genuine service: "Whatsoever thou sayest, Master, that will I do." This is, indeed, resultant number one in a fully consecrated life.

Look at the very height and heart of Jesus's earthly ministry. He had healed the centurion's servant. He touched the fevered brow of Peter's wife's mother and she was made strong again. Multitudes eagerly hung on his words. As he entered a boat to cross the sea of Galilee he was halted by hearing a scribe say: "Teacher, I will follow thee whitherso-

ever thou goest" (Matt. 8. 19). Jesus reminded him that such a resolution might lead him through suffering and hardship and persecution, but this scribe did not take back one word which he said. And here we find resultant number two in a fully consecrated life: "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest" (Luke 9. 57).

Look at a picture culled from the life of that noble servant of God, Philip. In the midst of his arduous duties, when this man was undoubtedly far from the barren wastes and weary stretches of the desert, we are told that the angel of the Lord spoke unto him, saying: "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza" (Acts 8. 26). Undoubtedly, this door of opportunity opened very unexpectedly before the eyes of Philip. What did he do? Did he stop and say, "Master, I am not traveling in a southward direction. The desert has no attraction for me, I do not care to go 'unto Gaza' "? No, this was not the spirit of this man. On the other hand, we are told that "he arose and went." The outcome of that obedience to an open door of opportunity, which became to him veritably a door of *importunity*, scarcely needs to be stated. How wonderfully he was used of God in leading the Ethiopian out into the unspeakable joy of a real Christian experience is a chapter from the Acts of the Apostles which reads like a romance. In the willing action of Philip we have resultant number three in any fully consecrated life: "Whenever thou callest, O Master, I will go."

THE CHALLENGE OF THE HOUR is a challenge to a stewardship which spells entire consecration. Jesus Christ is calling for an army of stewards who will place their lives so unreservedly at his disposal that wherever he would have them labor, and whatever he would have them do, and whenever he would call, they would gladly lift their faces toward his and say, "Yes, Master, I am at your service." To generalize: God is calling during these epoch-making days for an army of Christians who will make sure they are in his will. To individualize: Here I am with talents and powers, freely given

to me from the hand of God. Here is my *life* with all that word implies. It is not my own; God has first claim upon it. My highest desire should be, how may I best invest my life and demonstrate to God that I realize and appreciate my stewardship?

THE SPECIFIC FIELDS OF WORK that are open to consecrated lives are too many to be discussed here. All honest labor is sacred, especially if we are in his appointed place and faithfully administering our all as good stewards. The beginner is puzzled, because it seems hard to find what that work should be. There are certain aids, however, which if followed, will guide us into those channels of activity where we can be the most and do the most for the kingdom of God.

First, what are my aptitudes? Not that I am to build entirely on my strongest places any more than I am to devote all my time to strengthening my weakest. While discipline counts and is indispensable, yet most assuredly our own aptitudes must never be lost sight of, for the talents which God has given us demand the highest and completest development.

Second, what do others say who are best acquainted with us? A promising young man graduated with honors from Harvard University. His one ambition in life was to become a teacher. He accordingly studied in Europe, returned and secured a place on the faculty of the Boston Latin School. He held this position but a short time and resigned. Picture this young man, with despondent spirit, seeking out his friend, ex-President Walker, of Harvard University, to whom he was to unburden his heart. After hearing the story of the young man, the ex-president looked down into his face, and calling him by name, said, "Did you ever think that the Christian ministry would afford an excellent opportunity for you?"

The young man bristled with indignation and asserted: "I want to be somebody and do something in the world. I do not want to be a Christian minister."

This is the conception of the ministry too frequently held by young men.

To make a long story short, that young man matriculated in

a Southern theological seminary, and there, while studying, he found himself. On graduating he accepted the pastorate of a church in Philadelphia, then another church in the same city, and when but a comparatively young man, Phillips Brooks, prince of pulpit orators, stepped into the pulpit of Old Trinity Church, in Boston, Massachusetts, where, until his death, he wielded an influence equal in power to that intrusted to few men who have preached the unsearchable riches of the gospel of Jesus Christ. What helped him to do it? Many influences undoubtedly on the human side, but one in particular, and that was the advice of a friend.

More important than one's aptitudes, more important than the advice of our best friends, yes, even our loved ones, is, "What does Jesus Christ think about it?" If one says "Yes" to every impression that he gives, and lives in the fullest light, that will enable him to find what the will of Christ really is.

We have said there is a demand for loyal obedience. Verily, there is a *real* need, especially in these modern days, for men who will carry over into their business or profession a new insistence upon a vital partnership with Jesus Christ. Stewardship *is*, after all, a partnership.

We have said that the challenge of the hour is for an army of Christians who will go where Christ wants them to go. Miss Margaret Slattery tells of a college girl, from the Berkshires, who hoped and planned for so much in her life. To her fell the care of her only relative, an aunt, incurably stricken with cancer. This girl, who had nothing of Christ in her heart, who did not believe in him, stayed day after day doing those things she hated, bearing the things sweetly that she despised with her whole heart, because she ought. What a lesson for those who *do* have Christ in their hearts! Miss Slattery adds: "The day came when she knew Him, and I think heaven itself must have had a special love for that dear girl who alone so long had fought it out, made no complaint, stood by, and been true." Let us never forget that we "are not our own." We are bought with a price; where he points we must follow, and thus our lives will become vocal with the sentiment expressed in the familiar lines:

"It may not be on the mountain's height,
Or over the stormy sea,
It may not be at the battle's front
My Lord will have need of me
But if by a still, small voice he calls
To paths that I do not know,
I'll answer, 'Dear Lord, with my hand in thine,
I'll go where you want me to go.'"

Finally, the statement made at the beginning was as follows: The challenge of the hour is for an army of people who in full recognition of a genuine stewardship will cry out, "Whenever thou openest the way, O Master, I will walk therein."

Two college roommates sat one night in a far Western city on opposite sides of their study table, and being wearied with the arduous toil of the evening, they pushed their books to one side and settled back in their chairs for a friendly conversation.

The older said to the younger, "By the way, did I ever tell you my life story?"

"No," responded the younger. "Tell me; I would like to hear it."

Then they sat for a half hour. The story ran as follows:

"I had good parents. My boyhood days were surrounded with the best religious influences. Early in life I gave myself to Jesus Christ and during my high school days I had an impression that he wanted me to be a minister of his great gospel. However, I had other ambitions, and was entertaining the thought that some day I would be proprietor of a drug store; my desire was thoroughly to equip myself as a pharmacist. Accordingly, I pushed the impression aside and in reality said, 'No, not now, Master. I have other plans.' The months and finally the years, rolled by. I completed high school, went to a pharmaceutical college, received my diploma, and was at length registered as a pharmacist, in the State of W—.

"At the end of ten or eleven years my health being somewhat impaired, I was forced to surrender my good position and came out here to this sunny, Rocky Mountain climate. I went over in the northern part of the city and secured work in a drug concern.

"It had been a number of years since I had felt the call to the ministry. One night I had a dream. I am not superstitious, but this dream started a train of thought which changed the whole current of my life.

"I dreamed that my old high school friends back in S—— were coming down a little hill at the base of which I was standing. They were walking past me with beaming faces and greeting me in their old-time characteristic fashion. By and by I saw the form of Jesus Christ, and as he approached to a place within hand-shaking distance of where I was standing, he stopped, and looking at me searchingly, said, 'I do not know you.'

"I awoke, startled and surprised, and the thought flashed through my mind and pierced my heart like an arrow: 'No wonder Christ has forgotten you. Eleven years ago, or thereabouts, he called you to enter his ministry and you said 'No,' and here you are standing behind a drug counter, when you ought to be behind the pulpit.' I could not sleep.

"The next day I was sorely troubled, and the day following I was even more so. I began to lose interest in my work, and, worst of all, I felt my old-time Christian experience slipping away from me. Naturally, I went to my pastor over in the church which I was attending and opened my heart to him. He was very sympathetic and friendly and promised to join with me in prayer, that I might regain my old-time contact with the Master and get back once again into his favor.

"The hours of the lingering days went by. I was passing through a veritable Slough of Despond. I can *never* forget those days. The experience was so terrible that I went to my employer and pulling my gold watch from my pocket, I said: 'Mr. H——, please give me the money which this watch will bring, and whatever is coming to me in unpaid salary to date. I am going back to my native State and die within two weeks; I am lost!'

"The good man was frightened over my condition. He could not understand it. He thought I was unbalanced in my mind. Whenever I hear men speak slightly and flippantly of hell it has a very peculiar effect upon me; I know what hell is, for I lived in it for nine days while I was

struggling for light and help. My appetite was leaving me—I lost in weight.

“One clear, starlit night, as I was lying on my pillow, I raised my voice in prayer and said, ‘O Master, if thou wilt but come back into my heart and claim me once again as thy very own; if thou wilt come back and give unto me once more the joy of thy salvation; if thou wilt but reopen the door, I will go anywhere, to China or Africa or the far isles of the sea.’

“And then a sweet peace crept into my heart, and I realized that Christ was again flooding my life with joy and the positive certainty came that I was reinstated into his favor. Within two weeks of that night I surrendered my good position with Mr. H——, went out into the foothills of the old Rocky Mountains to build myself up in nerve and tissue, and matriculated here in the university about eight months ago.”

I was the younger of those two college men. I was moved by that story. My friend graduated from the theological seminary at thirty-nine years of age. I admire him and the stewardship he exemplified in walking through an open door of opportunity even at a late hour.

While your door of opportunity might not lead you out into the ministry, it may lead you into some definite work in your local church; it may lead you into some business which is not primarily classified as a distinctive Christian lifework; but whenever the door opens, it is for you, if you are a good steward of the “manifold grace of God,” to say as you look up into the face of your Master, “I will gladly walk through and carry out thy will in my life.”

O the joy of a stewardship which is complete! O, the rich peace that floods one’s life like a river when one can say always to the Master: “Whatever thou wouldst have me do, that is what I want to do. Wherever thou wouldst have me labor, there I want to labor. Whenever thou dost call me, then I want to answer ‘Yes.’”

“My gracious Lord, I own thy right
To every service I can pay,
And call it my supreme delight
To hear thy dictates, and obey.”

XX

The Virtue of Shrewdness

By Ralph W. Sockman

PIETY is the harmlessness of doves and the wisdom of serpents. Sometimes it is one, or the other, and then it is not piety. It must be both. We are apt to overlook their wisdom, in our thinking, and count the pious easy marks. This is a mistake. Goodness consists in being good for something, else it is not goodness. There is no such thing as abstract goodness. If you find a shrewd streak in you, consecrate it to God and use it for the kingdom.—Ed.

TEXT: "*For the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.*"—Luke 16. 8.

THE UNJUST STEWARD. At first glance the Master's words resemble those of some modern magazine writers. It has become quite common for preachers to seek applause by pointing out the stupidity of the church. Some people have come to think that men who will tie themselves to a creed and a church must be of second-rate minds. Those outside the Christian fold are wiser than those within. That's why they are outside. But Jesus himself had chosen these "sons of the light." Therefore, for him to criticize their natural ability would have been to admit that he had deliberately picked inferior specimens, or that he had made a mistake in his choice. Very clearly Jesus's words were no slap at the mentality of his disciples.

The Master put these words at the end of a difficult parable, the story of the unjust steward. This manager had been wasting his employer's goods; and then to save himself after his coming dismissal, he took from the owner's till, that he might make friends with some possible future employers. Yet despite this dishonesty, he received the commendation of the

man whom he had wronged. And Jesus seems to seal the act with his approval by saying, "The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light." This has been one of the darkest sayings of our Lord, for apparently we see a bad man held up for Christian imitation.

SHREWDNESS A VIRTUE. The difficulty, however, disappears when we learn the central purpose of the parable. Every parable of Jesus was aimed at one central object. In this one there is a single characteristic which the owner commends—his shrewdness. And I think the Master placed this quality against its dark background of dishonesty in order that it might stand out the more clearly. Jesus, that shrewd man who outwitted the wily Herod; that wise Teacher who escaped the clever traps of the Pharisees; that far-seeing Statesman who fashioned the program of the only kingdom that has lasted from that day to this; Jesus, who in sagacity of mind, stands without a peer, urged upon his followers this quality of shrewdness as a virtue. If the principles and purposes of Christ are to triumph, his disciples must learn sagacity and business sense. And they may learn even from Christ's enemies, "for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light."

CONCENTRATION AND SUCCESS. This steward had no keener mind than Christ's followers. The secret of his superior wisdom was that he concentrated on a single purpose. He had just one dominant motive, and that was to provide for his own welfare. I need not remind you that such singleness of aim is the secret of efficiency in any line of achievement. Our business world has recognized it and strives to make every man a specialist in order that he may give the full impact of his powers at one point. The psalmist saw this truth centuries ago, when feeling his energies being dissipated by distractions, he cried in prayer, "Unite my heart" (Psa. 86. 11). Paul gave this concentration as one secret of his progress when in reviewing his life to the Philippians he wrote, "I count not myself yet to have laid hold; but one thing *I do*." This singleness of aim gives strength in bad causes as well

as in good. Bismarck spent his life trying to unite the German people around Prussia as a center. He once said he was willing to be hung if they would use the rope to bind Germany together. Bismarck's concentration came so near succeeding that it took ten million lives to stop it.

Such singleness of purpose was a secret of the steward's shrewdness. He got what he went after because he concentrated on it and sacrificed to it honor, conscience, and everything else. His characteristic was that of a certain express train. There sweeps out of the Grand Central Station in New York city in the late hours every night a train known as the Cleveland Limited. Its one aim is to reach Cleveland. To this end it limits itself and has to sacrifice other pleasures. It cannot, for instance, indulge in the rare treat of stopping at Peekskill and Poughkeepsie; it cannot dissipate its energies by trying to accommodate the people of Rochester and Syracuse. It glides up along the Hudson, or noses its way in and out of the tunnels; it fairly spurns the towns along its course. It even skips through Albany and Buffalo at night when those cities are too quiet to distract the train's attention; it flashes along the southern shore of Lake Erie and puffs into the city of Cleveland in the early morning, hours ahead of any other schedule. It is the most efficient train for the business man's use, because it concentrates on one purpose. Such is the characteristic of the steward.

DISSIPATION COMMON AMONG CHRISTIANS. But the Christian is divided in his aim. He is both a business man, making a living, and a Christian developing his spiritual life with an eye to eternity. Certainly, then, we cannot expect him to be as efficient in both lines of work as the steward who concentrates all his thought and energy on his business. That Christ was referring to this is seen by his next remark as a sort of conclusion to this parable, "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye can not serve God and mammon."

THE LEFT-OVERS FOR THE KINGDOM. And while

some men neglect their business for the sake of developing their spiritual lives, the more common custom is to develop the business at the sacrifice of religion. The reason is not far to seek. Business seems of so much more immediate concern. We must first of all provide a living for ourselves and our loved ones. "Neglected business is like a neglected tooth"—it cries out and makes itself known. But a neglected soul may suffer in silence for years. And what is the natural result? We do as did the idol-maker of Isaiah's time, who cut down the trees and with part he warmed himself, with part he baked his bread, and with "the residue thereof he maketh a god." Religion gets the left-overs of our time and our thought. When we Christians give only the fragments of our energy, only the residue of our interest to the religious realm, is it any wonder that Jesus said, "The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light"?

HOW TO CONCENTRATE. Very clearly the steward's shrewdness consisted in his concentration on a single objective. But how can we concentrate who call ourselves Christians? The steward had nothing to concern him but his business. We are interested in two realms—business and religion. Both are important. You would not believe me if I told you that business was nonessential. God recognizes that a man's material wants demand thought. When Elijah was sent down to the poor widow of Zarephath he did not say, as some pious preachers might have said, "Think oftener of heaven, my sister, and you will feel better." Rather he said, "What hast thou in the house?" (2 Kings 4. 2). God's world could not be carried on if all men were to follow in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi.

But, on the other hand, we who call ourselves Christians cannot look upon the spiritual side of life as nonessential. "Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?" (Matt. 6. 25). It is intimate and personal, and although it may be hidden from the eyes of one's fellow men, it is seen of God. A sculptor was chiseling with delicate finesse the features of a small statue which was to surmount

a lofty spire. An onlooker asked, "Why do you spend so much time on that which is too high for men to see?"

The reply of the sculptor was characteristic of the true artist: "God will see it."

So answers the conscience of the Christian when he asks himself why he should spend time and thought and money in cultivating the so-called religious side of life. The man who believes in the God of Jesus Christ knows that the Godward side of his nature must not be neglected.

BUSINESS AND RELIGION ARE BOTH IMPORTANT. How, then, can we concentrate? May I go into the business office to answer? In that office are two filing cabinets. One is marked "Business Accounts" and its well-kept files show the owner to be systematic in that realm. The other is labeled "Religious Accounts." It is a trifle dusty, for it is Friday and it has not been opened since Sunday. The files are all jumbled. The owner's explanation is that business keeps him so busy that he does not have time to systematize his religious accounts. What can I suggest? This: Get a cabinet big enough to hold the contents of both. Label it "Religion" and put into it all your business papers, all your personal and religious dealings. Then every time you file an expense account you can ask, "Is this making the world better?" Every time you record the receipt of income, you can ask: "Is this business bringing God's kingdom nearer to earth? Is it making men of better bodies or finer characters?" If entries can meet this test, they have a right to be classified under the heading "Religion." With one file to keep, you too can concentrate as did the steward.

This was the kind of filing system Paul kept, for he told the Athenians that God was "one in whom we live and move and have our being." Everything Paul did he could classify under the heading of "Religion." Great singleness of purpose marked John Stewart Kennedy, perhaps the most princely benefactor New York city ever produced. Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst said of him: "Mr. Kennedy's Christianity was a pervasive atmosphere which gave breath and subsistence and

color to every remaining feature of his life. . . . To serve God and his fellow man sums up in a word the meaning of his life." And Christ drove this same idea home when he said, "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6. 33). Are not these but different ways of saying, "Write 'Religion' over the filing system of your life, and classify under it all your income, your expenditures, your relationships"?

When all our dealings are placed under one great system, we Christians are no longer divided between our loyalty to business and our devotion to our spiritual development. We can have the same singleness of purpose as had the steward. We shall be faithful to our business and thereby faithful to our God.

If any ask for further proof, the past two years will furnish it. Before America entered the war, multitudes of men in this country were trying to serve God and mammon. But when the war came business was made the servant of the nation. One great dominant purpose gripped employers and employees. Men wrote "Victory" over their filing systems and put under it everything—income, expenses, time, labor, life. Did it lessen efficiency? Perhaps, in a few lines of work, but in the large majority of activities we have gained in cooperation and conservation more than in any previous two years of our history. When our dearest possessions were at stake during the war, every true American was steward of his nation. The war made us better business men. When a Christian becomes, in like manner, a steward of his God, he becomes a better worker in the world of business and a wiser citizen in the kingdom of heaven.

XXI

Intercessory Prayer

By James M. Thoburn

"THE good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." The spirit of uttermost consecration makes intercessory prayer possible. Identification with the lost makes us saviours. Then "there is a divinity that shapes our ends." Is there any test of consecration from which we shrink? Make it immediately, and say, "I live, yet not I."—Ed.

TEXT: "*Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book.*"—Exod. 32. 32.

THIS reads like a New Testament text, but it belongs to the Old Testament. It sounds like Paul, but Moses speaks. It was at Mount Sinai, where the law was given, that mercy was found to be no stranger. The Israelites had fallen into base idolatry during Moses' forty-days' absence. It does not take long for even highly favored people to lapse into barbarism. It was inevitable that retribution should follow such wrongdoing. Israel paid dearly for the obscene worship of that golden calf.

ATONEMENT. "Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Jehovah; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin." He did not tell them what he was going to do, but he took no animal with him for the sacrifice—yet he was hoping to make atonement for their sin. It was a most daring innovation to attempt in a religious system where rites and sacrifices were so conspicuous. We Christians have been taught to say:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

Yet Moses knew nothing of that cross. How, then, could he have hopes to gain access to the throne of grace?

And so, up into the mountain he goes again. The first time he had been called up, but now he goes on his own initiative. He was there as the representative of his people. When he confessed their sins he kept nothing back. He felt the weight and woe of their offense even more than the people did. The closer we get to God, the blacker all sins appear. But the plea Moses made for mercy was unique. God had just been legislating for those very people.

HE KNEW GOD. Moses had been his councilor and recorder, so he knew the law and the mind of the lawgiver. And he made his plea for pardon on the principle underlying the decalogue, that God has bound himself by the same moral obligations which he has imposed upon man. Nothing could be right on earth which was not right in heaven. The Ruler and the ruled are under the same scepter of righteousness. This was the keynote of Moses's intercessory prayer.

GOD IS AS GOOD AS HE WANTS US TO BE. Again and again God had called the children of Israel "my people." Moses argued that they were still God's people in spite of their sin, and that God owed it to himself to give them another chance. God had forbidden men to kill each other, therefore, neither must God abandon them in the wilderness to die. If man must not kill, neither must God kill. The disciple must not be better than the Master. And furthermore, God is under the same obligation to truthfulness as is required of men. He is the God of truth. He cannot lie. He had solemnly promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their children should be as numerous as the stars of heaven and be a great blessing to all other people.

THE SUPPLICATION OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN. Moses did not stop with his unanswerable argument. I do not know how God could have refused such a prayer, if the "Amen" had been uttered then and there. But when a righteous man prays, his prayer is not only effectual, it also is fervent. And so this man of God pleading for mercy for others throws himself into the scale as the last and best

offering he can make. Hear him as he cries, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin"—and then the strong man broke down. He was overcome by his feelings. He could not express himself. What he did not say was more eloquent than his spoken words. God knew what was in that burdened man's heart.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast."

When at last Moses got control of himself he managed to say "and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Jesus prayed thus in Gethsemane. Moses was willing to make the supreme sacrifice in order that Israel might be saved. That is praying, effectually and fervently. What a tremendous hold his work had upon him! "If thou canst not forgive them—then blot me out of thy book."

THERE IS NO SERVICE GREATER THAN INTERCESSORY PRAYER. It binds "the whole round world in every way with chains of gold about the feet of God." Prayer is the heart of religion. It is the most exalted stewardship. Is there any spot more sacred than the soul's mercy seat? Yet even there we often practice a kind of selfish beggary and call it prayer. Very few people ever pray except to ask some favor for themselves or their loved ones. No other interest in all this wide world ever sends them to the throne of grace.

MOSES WAS NOT BEGGING OF GOD, but reasoning with him; communing with him; making mention of his promises; and all the while getting into more perfect sympathy with him and his world plans. He prayed. Prayer is keeping company with God. God and man meet on common ground, their wills blend, the results are called miracles.

This intercessory prayer of Moses accomplished a great work. It made a change in God's plans. It saved a nation. It made suffering for others a crowning virtue that was to have its supreme illustration in the death of Christ.

DOUBTS. And yet scarcely a day passes that we do not

encounter that old doubt first expressed in the days of Job, "What profit should we have if we pray unto him?" Which is only another way of saying, "There is no advantage in prayer." We cannot change the laws of the universe, neither can we change the mind of God.

Let us see about this statement. Of course there is a lot of so-called praying that amounts to nothing. It is too selfish. It does not commit the petitioner to a closer walk with God, or seek the glory of God. James said of such, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* in your pleasures!" It is such praying that is the father of this doubt. Because nothing comes of such prayers, we are told that prayer is futile.

PRAYER AT ITS BEST. But unselfish prayer—intercessory prayer—prayer for others is entirely different. In reckoning the value of prayer we must judge of prayer at its best. What has prayer wrought in the world? It is difficult to tabulate such facts. Men are disposed to credit the agencies of prayer more than the influence which works on and through those agencies. And they are further disposed to doubt the present-day reality of prayer. They believe that Israel prevailed over Amalek because Joshua prayed, and that King Asa and his little army defeated the Ethiopian hosts that marched against them because God took the side of the Hebrews. But they do not think God had anything to do with keeping the Germans out of Paris. Every devout soldier will tell you that no military reason can account for the Germans not breaking through the thin line of the Allies again and again. Intercessory prayer was made without ceasing, and Germany discovered it was hard to kick against such pricks. Some may call those pricks bayonets, but more than all else, it was God, taking sides.

Dr. John R. Mott saw six hundred Chinese students surrender to Jesus Christ one Sunday afternoon while he was in the Far East in the Student Volunteer Service. It was not his word, nor man's. He was too weary and too poorly prepared, according to his own statement, to look for such

results. But all around the world groups of Christian students were making intercession for him.

A number of years ago, when I was a pastor in Calcutta, India, there came a missionary from Orissa. We breakfasted together, and he told of the wonderful victory of the day before. One month later that brother returned. He had been reaping marvelous results. His face was brighter than ever. He had learned the secret of his success. The home mail, four weeks en route, had just been received. The entire denomination to which he belonged had united in prayer for him and his mission. He had gone forth that day to his labor to find the windows of heaven opening with such blessings as he never knew were for him. Intercessory prayer did it, and will do it again for every mission and missionary.

PRAYER IS IRRESISTIBLE. We intercede for others, and Jesus Christ "ever liveth to make intercession for us," so that intercessory prayer is really a double intercession. "Nothing lies outside the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God." True intercession means casting in yourself. It is the costliest of all things.

WHEN WE INTERCEDE for others or for some great cause, we are candidates for appointment as God's messenger. He may appoint us to do that work, just as the maker of a motion in a meeting is given a place on the committee, and often made the chairman. He may appoint you to a task from which you shrink—an undertaking of which you never dreamed.

PRAYER BRINGS THE SOUL INTO TOUCH WITH God and his plans. This were enough, without further direct results. We all suffer from provincialism. We have such a narrow and unambitious outlook on life. How it expands the mind to entertain a great thought, as it enlarges the heart to be possessed with a generous purpose! It even enriches a life to dream dreams. A mind without a great thought, a heart without a generous purpose, a life without a dream, is like time without eternity.

SUPPOSE YOU BEGIN TO PRAY for the conversion of the world—and keep it up. It will soon dignify and ennoble your life in every way. It will lift you and broaden your character. You will want to learn more about this world for which you are praying. As you grow more concerned in the salvation of the Christless nations you will take on the spirit of Moses.

DO WE CARE VERY MUCH FOR THE UNSAVED? Suppose the evangelization of India were to stop to-day, would it make you unhappy? "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (James 5. 16). Suppose the future usefulness of this church depended on your prayers, would you continue to say, "Now I lay me down to sleep," or would you cry as Moses did, "God bless this church, and send it the true prosperity—or let me die, rather than see it fail"?

XXII

The Fundamental Law of the Kingdom

By Mrs. Iva Durham Vennard

THE loser shall find. We boys thought "finder's keepers." So it is in this case. How it hurt when we had to give up what we found! We didn't know that there ought to be as much joy in expression as in impression, in giving as receiving, in loving as in being loved. Are you puzzled over your consecration? This sermon will help.—Ed.

TEXT: "*He that loseth . . . for my sake shall find.*"—Matt. 10. 39.

IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF THE KINGDOM that our Lord laid down when he said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Man has tried through the generations to find the secret of peace; but the best of human systems, unaided by divine revelation, fall short.

THE ORIENTAL THINKER SAYS, the way to find happiness is to deny all craving and finally to arrive at such an advanced stage of thought development that all desire shall fail. The soul may then become enfolded within the infinite, in Nirvana.

THE OCCIDENTAL THINKER SAYS man cannot accept the Oriental philosophy of negation. To stifle all desire is to sacrifice personality itself. No, contentment comes, not by the denial of all craving, but by its satiation, therefore let us *Get*. This Western philosophy of the self-life has produced the feverish unrest and sordid materialism so familiar in our civilization. Christ breaks in upon the incompleteness and error of this Western reasoning with the question, "What doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?"

(Mark 8. 36.) And this brings us to the fundamental law which meets the failure of human philosophy, Eastern and Western, with the divine secret of happiness.

HE THAT LOSETH HIS LIFE. Some one wrote a book once entitled "What All the World's Aseeking." We need not stray into far fields to find it. It lies here in the words of Jesus—"Whosoever gives up his own self center of life, whosoever ends his quest in complete consecration, whosoever recognizes his relation as a steward to God, looking upon possessions, ambitions, even affections and life itself, as a trust committed to him from God; in short, whosoever loseth his life for Christ's sake shall find it."

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" (Matt. 16. 24-26).

CONSECRATION. Christ understands profoundly the requirements of the human soul, the laws of its development, and he says we must forsake our own carnal selfhood to follow him, not as an arbitrary requirement on his part, but as an absolute necessity for us in order that we may find our larger life in his life. We remember that when Christ took up his cross, his way led to Calvary—crucifixion. He laid down his life that we might live. He offered himself in atonement, and his blood avails for us, providing an uttermost salvation, a complete deliverance from sin, a restored fellowship with God through the Holy Spirit. His atonement was a whole-hearted offering. Could God consistently require less of us than a whole-hearted response? Can we answer Christ's atonement with less than a complete consecration? We must recognize the divine logic then: if Christ denied himself, taking up his cross and going all the way to Calvary, we cannot consistently claim to be following him as disciples unless we deny ourselves, taking up our cross and going to

our Calvary—the crucifixion of our carnal selfhood, through an uttermost consecration, by which Christ becomes our uttermost Saviour.

GAIN—OR LOSS? Knowing perfectly that the carnal nature is prone to assert itself in the realm of those things which a man claims as his possessions, his material wealth, Christ puts the test at this point. "Suppose you should succeed in accumulating the riches of the whole world; if you have forgotten or refused to acknowledge the divine ownership, if you have trampled on the fact of your stewardship to God, if you have denied the claims of Christ upon your heart and your life, you have lost your soul. And if in the worldly success your own selfish soul has shriveled up in its materialism and wickedness, what can you give to buy back your soul?" The recognition of my stewardship, the free acknowledgment of God's right by ownership is absolutely necessary for me as a protection to my own soul against the pagan enslavement of the love of money. Hence the justice, the consistency of this fundamental law of the kingdom as it is applied to my so-called possessions. I must give up my claim of ownership—I must lose my self-center in this realm of property; I must acknowledge the divine ownership, then will I find my larger life in Christ.

You see how much deeper this goes, dear heart, than simply resolving to become a tither? We believe fully in proportionate and systematic giving, and the tithe is a good place to begin. But this principle which we are considering goes far deeper than the legalistic idea of simply paying a tenth of one's income to the church. This involves the utter consecration of the ten tenths to God, yielding to him the right to dispense all to his glory and the advancement of the kingdom. Then we pay the tithe as an acknowledgment that all is his and we meet all the obligations of life as stewards for him. We pay our debts, educate our children, conduct our business, provide for our homes, recognizing that all our money is a trust and we must give a full account of it all to God. Nothing less than this meets the demand of an entire consecration. But the

recognition of our stewardship in material possessions is only a part of the full requirement.

Let us turn again to the words of our Lord: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: and a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10. 34-39).

THOU SHALT LOVE WITH ALL. This is one of the "hard sayings" of Christ, and many a soul has "turned back from following him" when confronted by this requirement. These words search to the core of our affections, and here too we must let the carnal self-center be crucified; we must live the great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL." We must lose the self-love and let it be swallowed up in the larger life. This must be the actual working principle of our life.

Are you a mother? Suppose God puts his hand on your son and says, "I want this boy for a foreign mission field." Will you say, "Amen, I am honored to be the mother of a missionary"? Or will such a call break in upon your own plans for the lad, and your heart say: "No, I cannot spare him. If the Lord should want him for America, it wouldn't be so bad, but he must not go so far away from me. That would break my heart"? O, mother dear, even our children are a trust from God. We are partners with him in training and loving these immortal souls, and we must give an account to him of our influence and affection in their lives. We dare not interfere with God's purpose for them. And the corollary is also true: We must not permit them to interfere with God's purpose for us.

LOVE IN RIGHT RELATION. It does not mean that we love our dear ones less when we truly enthrone our Lord as first in our heart. Not at all. It is the harmonizing of our life with Infinite Love, the bringing of all our loves into their right relation. Our love of husband or wife, of father or mother, of brother or sister, of children or friends, is all hallowed and made more sweet and more self-sacrificing by our supreme love to God. Our human affection loses its exacting self-claim and the bitter root of jealous demands dies out. Then we discover, like wrestling Jacob, that He who has held us to this struggle with our inmost love is not a hard and cruel stranger.

“’Tis love! ’Tis love! Thou diedst for me;
I hear Thy whisper in my heart;
The morning breaks, the shadows flee;
Pure, universal love thou art;
To me, to all, Thy mercies move—
Thy nature and Thy name is Love.”

A LOVE PROMISE. But—this saying of our Lord closes with a promise. Did you note that? If we lose the old life for his sake we shall find the larger life. It will not impoverish our heart. It will enrich us an hundredfold. Our affections are purified, our love is made perfect, our life is exalted. The Holy Spirit dwells within, and eternal values become real and precious. The blind singer, George Matheson, caught the glory of this blessed truth and wrote,

“O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.”

LONESOME SELF-LOVER. Let us turn once more to this fundamental law of the kingdom as laid down by our Lord, and let us read it this time as recorded by John: “And Jesus answereth them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that

loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will the Father honor" (John 12. 23-26).

OUR AMBITIONS. We have thus far studied this truth as applied to our material possessions and our affections, but in this statement of it the application involves still another phase of life. It includes our ambitions and our ministry. Christ illustrates this law by comparing it with a law of nature. If a grain of wheat is to become productive, it must be planted. It loses its own identity. It gives up its individual life in order that it may be multiplied. And this sets forth the profound significance of the crucifixion of selfish ambitions. The ministry of such a life is productive. A harvest is assured. Has not our Lord said to such a disciple, "I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should abide"? Nor does this refer to preachers alone. Every soul has a ministry. You may not be engaged in any distinctive line of Christian service, and your lot may be very obscure, but if you are following Jesus you have a ministry and your life is bearing fruit.

THE INNERMOST MOTIVE. And just here this fundamental law searches out the inmost motive of our life. What have you that you count as treasure? Have you been well born? Thank God for it. Have you talents—capacities of mind, of personality? Have you had good educational opportunities? Thank God. But how do you value these? As giving you an advantage over your brother who has not been so richly endowed? Nay, nay; they make you his debtor. Every talent, every ability, every advantage is a trust from God. It is a liability. You must render an account to him of its investment. Have you a good voice? Rejoice in using it, not that it may sway men with admiration of you and thus gratify a self-love of praise or give you an influence whereby you may serve your own selfish interests, but, rather, that you may sing the good news to needy souls, that you may plead

with the sinner and comfort the sorrowing to the glory of God. Have you executive ability? It is a great trust. What is your deepest motive in exercising it? That you may get position, influence, official recognition, worldly or ecclesiastical power? Such an ambition must surely die or your ministry will be barren of the richest fruit. We cannot be serving for self-aggrandizement and be servants of Jesus. If you have executive ability, it has been intrusted to you that you may carry heavy burdens. You must invest it in some enterprise for God, bearing the pressure of responsibility, often plodding in the drudgery of routine, perhaps without any human friend to appreciate or even to understand, in order that you may open channels for your brethren and sisters, that they too may serve for the advancement of the kingdom. O that we might lay bare our ambitions and let the refining fire of the Holy Spirit purify and sanctify wholly!

CHRIST'S LIFE IS THE SUPREME ILLUSTRATION of the working of this law. In him there was no selfish assertion of ownership, even though he knew himself to be the Son of God as well as the Son of man. There was no carnal self-center in his affections. His friendships, his loves were subordinated utterly to the Father's glory. In him there never was a trace of carnal ambition, though Satan made his appeal to this motive in the wilderness. The meek and lowly Christ turned not away from the cross. He accepted its humiliation, its contumely, its anguish, even the crucial trial of the averting of his Father's face, but before he entered upon this supreme ordeal he said, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12. 23). Faith reached ahead and through the passion grasped the fruit of the Father's reward. And he says to us, his disciples, "If you will indeed follow me; if you will subordinate your whole selfhood to the operation of this law of self crucifixion, making it the working principle of your whole life, then you shall surely be with me in my glory; and if you serve me with this purified motive, the Father will honor you."

AH, SOUL, ARE YOU AMBITIOUS? Will not the

honor of the Father be enough? Who can tell how much this may mean? To be honored of God! To be glorified with Christ! How puny is human praise or popularity in comparison! "Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away," but Thou who changest not but abideth forever, Thou hast promised to honor thy servant. Let me lose my life for Christ's sake! Let all that is carnal within me die. Let me lavish my years for God and my neighbor as freely as wine poured forth.

My Lord, grant that my motives may be so purged, my love so perfected, my life so yielded to the Holy Spirit, my ministry so sanctified to thy glory, that at the close of the day I may hear thee say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

XXIII

The Authority of the Tithe

By Stanley Ward

"He isn't all there," pityingly we hear it said. Something important has been omitted. The Christian inquires, "By what authority am I to tithe?" And God sadly says, "He isn't all there." O Man, consider your need of the Father and come with a whole offering.—Ed.

TEXT: "*By what authority doest thou these things?*"—Matt. 21. 23.

MORE than once Jesus was questioned as to his authority. A notable instance is at the cleansing of the temple. Another is when the Jews claimed that he was holding them in suspense as to who he really was. The Master's answer to this challenge is worth pondering. He did not give the questioners the sort of answer they were looking for. Their kind of answer would have been of little use. He gave them his own kind of answer, which was not a reliance upon some famous writer or some startling event in the heavens. He told them the answer lay in the things themselves that he did, that if they would see those things steadily and see them whole they would get the truth. And very necessary to such seeing was a spirit of sincerity on their part.

THE TITHE is before us. Naturally our question before adopting it is, By what authority is it held out as a duty? Let us learn the Master's principle and apply it here. Let us not seek to know what some learned rabbi has said; let us not search for some miraculous outside attestation. Let us see the tithe whole and see it steadily. If to tithe is a Christian action, why may we not expect it to yield us the same kind of testimony as Jesus claimed issued from any of his deeds while here in the flesh? "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me."

TRUTH. Now the essence of Christ's thought is that anything that is true has vital relations with everything else that is true. If anything that is put forth does not "connect up" with other things assuredly true, if it is isolated, then it is not true. But if it reaches out and establishes a deep affinity with other truth, it is true. Every truth roots itself in every other truth. Here is a principle we recognize in practical life.

Does the prospective purchaser of an automobile look simply at the automobile itself? Not at all. Even when he has raised the hood and is inspecting the engine he is not looking at the machine itself. What he is trying to do is to connect that engine with whatever knowledge he has of mechanics and machinery. If he cannot establish a complete connection, he does not buy that automobile. The manufacturer knows better than to make his customer look at the automobile itself. For besides guiding the customer in establishing the connection with mechanical truth while the hood is up, he shows him pictures of the automobile. Notice such a picture. I remember one I looked at a short time ago.

The automobile did not stand by itself. There was a beautiful young lady seated at the wheel, her returned soldier lover was at her side. An older sister was on the back seat. The car was standing and a little six year old girl was sitting on the running board. Besides, there was the beautiful sky and the lovely scenery of a country road. That picture meant that the beauty of the automobile cannot be appreciated until it is seen in the midst of the beauty of friendship, the one which leads finally to the home, the beauty of nature, and the beauty of patriotism. And in other ways than by the picture the manufacturer strives to make his customer see the automobile truly by seeing it in its relations.

Tennyson knows the principle:

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all
I should know what God and man is.

Well does the scientist Faraday know it: "There is not a law under which any part of this universe is governed that does not come into play in the phenomenon of the chemical history of a candle." We may reverse a common mathematical idea and say that in life the part must contain the whole.

Very largely people have not applied this principle to the tithe. They have tried to see the tithe all by itself. It has meant nothing to them except ten per cent. They have not tried to see it whole; they have not inquired into its inmost nature, where some of its most convincing testimony lies. The vision will come to any man who will open his eyes, that the tithe is not an isolated act but is one that connects itself with all other Christian truth and duty, and one to which all other Christian truth and duty reach out.

LOVE, GOD, AND THE TITHE. Consider whole-hearted love for God. The tithe is vitally related to that. Jesus said we were to love God with all our strength. A very great deal of our strength we put into our daily work which results in our possession of money. This money, as one has expressed it, is our "stored up personality." When we spend our money we are simply directing the expenditure of our accumulated and concentrated strength. Whatever we love registers itself in the objects for which we spend our money. "Money talks" very loudly about the earner and the spender. It is the heart manifesting itself. If therefore we love God how can we escape expressing our love in the way of the tithe? If we give to the Lord without system and without proportion we certainly are not loving him with our heart, mind and strength. Such giving is good as far as it goes, but it falls far short of the use of all the soul of the man. Real and intense love for God quickly recognizes in the tithe a very needful way of working itself out.

PROPERTY. Every one of us has a good deal to do with property. God made us with a desire to say of many things, "They are mine." But while the desire to possess is a fundamental part of human nature, it is not one to which we can resign ourselves carelessly. It is something which needs

regulation. Our desire for property can lead us to dishonesty and robbery, to desecration of the Sabbath day, to covetousness and, it may be, to idolatry. More than one of the ten commandments has to do with the right attitude toward property. Jesus recognized both the importance and the danger of property, or wealth as the economists and social leaders call it. He told men to adopt some very drastic measures to keep their hearts from misusing it. The men of the Middle Ages laid great stress on these teachings of the Master and thought that he enjoined absolute poverty on his followers. Their remedy was a very simple one, but it was not thoroughly effective; moreover, they surely missed some of the Master's thought, though they may have been nearer to his whole thought than those who to-day go to the extreme of materialism in their attitude toward wealth.

THE MAN WHO IS AWARE of the dangers that beset the human heart in regard to property eagerly seizes the tithe as a most helpful means of safety and right use. He sees in it a means of sanctification. The tithe reminds him that God gave him property; that he is an honored steward of God and must give an account of all that is intrusted to him. Further, he finds in it a most wholesome discipline of his heart against a secular spirit. It helps to make him more than rich; it makes him rich toward God.

MR. WESLEY SAID that there seemed to be a tendency in religion to degeneration. When a man became religious, he became industrious, he then became thrifty, he then became wealthy, and he then became worldly. Wesley's remedy therefore was proposed in these words: "Earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can." Such giving must be on some other basis than impulse; it must be on the basis of proportion, and the proportion must increase with a man's prosperity.

THE TITHE IS VITAL in more than the sanctification of property; it is vital in the sanctification of nearly everything else; for property or money enters into nearly everything else with which we have to do. He who tithes dots his whole life

with active centers of sanctification which will work until he is without spot or blemish or any such thing. No one who cares for spiritual discipline and purity of life can neglect the tithe.

LIBERTY. These are days when we are thinking much of liberty. The Christian is at home in the thought. He wants liberty. But he has a true thought of what liberty is and how it is to be obtained. He knows that it is not license and that impulse unregulated is not the means to the end.

Liberty is something to be won; law is the way to liberty, not the road away from it. A child who is allowed to hold the violin and the bow as he pleases does not acquire musical freedom. He only fetters himself so that freedom is impossible to him. Does a man desire to have liberty in his moral and spiritual life? He will not find it by casting aside laws and rules; that way lies slavery. He will find it by stern discipline of himself, by imposing upon himself things to which in his present estate he has some dislike. By rigorous obedience to law he will come to delight and joy in the law, and his whole higher self will have abundance of freedom. The tithe offers itself as the way to liberty. Would you learn large and cheerful, yea sacrificial, giving? Adopt the tithe. It proves itself God's ordained way to freedom in giving. It is difficult for most of us in our present state. It does not confront our judgment so much as our flesh. It has a cross in it. God's plan is to give us a crown through a cross. Not the crown for the sake of the cross; but the cross for the sake of the crown.

OUR FATHER, WE'RE HERE. General Pershing at Lafayette's tomb, said, "Lafayette, we're here." Would it not be a glorious thing if we Christians of to-day could stand, equipped and prepared, at the grave of Francis Asbury, and say, "Asbury, these lands over which you strove so diligently, through more than forty years, to spread scriptural holiness, are hearing the Gospel's joyful sound"? Would it not be a glorious thing if we could also stand in the same way at the grave of Henry Martyn, who longed to burn out for God and

chose to do it in India, and report that that land of misery and false faiths was learning the way and the grace of Christ? Yes, would it not be a fine thing if we could stand at a thousand graves scattered here and there over this dark world and give the assurance that the labors of the first daring servants of Christ in heathen lands were being carried forward to completion by the Master's present-day servants? But how can we do that? How did General Pershing do it? He was the custodian of the liberties of the world, a steward of one of humanity's greatest treasures. But that stewardship he could not fulfil until another stewardship had been fulfilled. The American people had first of all to say to their government: "Take our railroads, our factories, our money, our food, our sons, our very selves if need be. All we are and all we have is yours." Only as the stewardship of life and the stewardship of property were established could the stewardship of liberty and democracy be fulfilled.

ONE STEWARDSHIP NEEDS ANOTHER. We cannot look up to the saints and to Christ and say with truth as we stand in the midst of the world still cursed by sin, "Christ, we're here"; we cannot so report until we have put our wealth at the disposal of the Church.

The tithe is vital to the kingdom of God. We are at the point now—indeed we have always been there, but we see it now as we have not seen it for some time—that the kingdom of God must remain at a standstill in a most tragic and also a most glorious hour, unless the tithes of the Christian people are laid on the altar. This is what the tithe says for itself when we face the kingdom task of to-day.

Only a few indications of the vital relation of the tithe with all Christian truth and duty have been given. But surely any one of them is enough. The tithe has its authority within itself. He who sees it whole and sees it steadily will find that in having to do with it he is having to do with all the things of Christ.

With such authority the law of the tithe should have universal and glad observance.

XXIV

Why Should I Tithe?

By Robert Watt

WELL, why not tithe? Think it out for yourself. If your religious life is not a mental stimulus, you are not getting all there is in it. Ask yourself the question, and be fair with yourself in answering it. The sermon outline will help you to answer "Why should I tithe?"—ED.

TEXT: "*But these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone*"—Matt. 23. 23b.

Weymouth's "New Testament in Modern Speech" renders it: "These things ye ought to have done, and yet you ought not to have left the others undone."

Moffatt's "The New Testament, A New Translation" interprets it: "These latter you ought to have practiced—without omitting the former."

IT IS THE FASHION to discredit this passage as a support of Jesus's indorsement of the tithe. Such negative critical processes react and discredit the critic and his criticism.

Jesus's purpose, while commending their zeal for observance of the law, is to help them to see that they cannot observe the law when neglecting its spirit. Observing only the letter reduces their practice to a mechanical and fragmentary exercise, and thus it "killeth."

Jesus seldom spoke thus of Jewish rites. That he did thus speak of tithing, and use it as a support for his teaching, has meaning for the subject under consideration. He hardly would use as a support for "justice and mercy and faithfulness" anything weaker or less important than justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

Our question is, "Why Should I Tithe?"

1. A definite portion of my income is sacred to the work of the kingdom of God.

It is a definite portion, not based upon emotion, feeling, or impulse, but upon a clearly stated and understood obligation. It is the material acknowledgment of stewardship, of God's ownership of all we have. We may administer directly for the kingdom beyond the tithe, but the tithe stands as the beginning of our right relation to God.

2. This definite portion of my income is a trust that must be administered for God.

We are his stewards. Our first obligation is to him. Our obligations to the church, or to the benevolent boards, are binding only because of our obligation to God.

3. The tithe, were it not an obligation, is the most convenient and practical basis for administering our possessions rightly.

Ask doubters to name a substitute for the tithe. They will have to consider the subject, and men who consider the subject have always named the tithe.

4. A tither is always a happy, triumphant Christian.

I have never known an exception; have you? Happiness is not an end in itself, even though men are guaranteed the right to pursue it, yet it is a symptom of health.

5. The tither has money for any good object which makes its appeal to him.

He loses the wrenched feeling that tortures the nontither when he gives, for he is administering a trust, not giving. He no longer complains that "it is always money, money, money!" He finds it so pleasant that he makes free-will offerings and has a "grand and glorious feeling."

6. Tithing will solve every financial problem of the church.

Begging, scolding, money-making schemes, questionable expedients of every sort become unnecessary. It is worth while. The Holy Spirit has been grieved by the haphazard, loose, slipshod, sometimes sharp and tricky financial devices of our churches. It is a mild scandal, excluding the joy of giving and the luxury of soulful service.

These answers to "Why Should I Tithe?" may be multiplied indefinitely. God doesn't ask us to take it on faith in his word. He says "Prove me thereby." Try it first. The evidence is all on the side of tithing. Nevertheless, you know the truth only when it makes you free. You must try it for yourself. With thousands of others enlist now. If you never said it before, say it at once: "Here am I, count on me." Don't be just one of the counted, but one who counts.

DO IT NOW!

XXV

The Higher Commandeering

By Manfred C. Wright

ONE of the strange fruits of the war is lawlessness; a reaction from government's imperatives to the denying of all authority. Christian stewards find no difficulty in adjusting themselves. They have great advantage in every place. A higher quality of personality develops from association with the Supreme Personality. They do not fret and fume while God is "making all things work together for their good." —ED.

TEXT: "*The Lord hath need of them.*"—Matt. 21. 3.

THE Bible is remarkable for the wealth of basic principles which it embodies in apparently trivial circumstances. The incident of requisitioning the colt of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem is one such case in point. The principle here involved is that of the higher commandeering.

THE COMMON GOOD. We are now perfectly familiar with commandeering in war, when food, fuel, munitions, industries, transportation came under government control for military purposes. Such commandeering goes unquestioned. We recognize that it is not the ruthless display of arbitrary force by a power which is stronger over a weaker unit, but that it justifies itself in the ultimate protection it brings to property and life. If the enemy were victorious, what value would property have for the conquered? If the enemy were victorious, what outcome to the conquered but submission and slavery?

THE KINGDOM COMMANDEERING. There is also a higher commandeering with which we have not been quite so familiar, but with which we may be as we continue in war.

It is the commandeering of Christ in the interest of the kingdom of God. The recognition of this principle above selfish interests and private concerns is a supreme need of modern life. The failure fully to recognize this principle may be taken as the meaning of God's exaction of such tremendous present sacrifices.

INWARD COMPULSION. By the recognition of the higher commandeering is meant the recognition, not by outward compulsion, but by inward insight, that the needs of Christ's kingdom are sovereign and must be answered first from available human assets. Militating against this principle is the distorted notion of personal liberty and human sovereignty. There is also sometimes the plea of personal insignificance. To the demand that all should bring their contribution for kingdom service the answer is sometimes made that millionaires exclusively should finance the kingdom and talented people only should serve therein.

GOD A RESPONSIBLE OWNER. All these objections to the higher commandeering are swept away when it is remembered that all values belong to God; that what possessions we have are made valuable and secure through Christianity; that human life itself becomes valuable only by Christian recognition; that human plans and purposes become worthless unless related to God's; that when God calls for human values he becomes responsible for the outcome; that, under God, the smallest human value loses its insignificance and becomes an essential part of the divine program; that when we withhold from God, our part is forever unfulfilled, and that when we give to God whole-heartedly we become colaborers with him.

THREE ESSENTIAL VALUES may answer to the higher commandeering:

First, **ONE'S PROPERTY**, not necessarily the capital, but the income. God needs property values in the interest of his spiritual kingdom. Recognition of this would speed the coming of the kingdom.

Second, **ONE'S LIFE**. Property values rendered to God become personally valueless without a consecrated life. The

call for lives may not be for ministerial service, but for consecration anywhere.

Third, ONE'S CHILDREN. As parents give sons to national service, so ought they to give them to God. To fail here shows lack of complete consecration. Now that the war is over, it will not be so hard for parents to give their sons and daughters to the ministry and missionary labors when they shall have become familiar with the imperative need of the nation and the ways in which they may answer it.

FAR STRETCHING KINGDOM PROGRAMS to-day demand this higher commandeering. Philanthropic programs! Humanitarian programs! Social service programs! Missionary programs! Centenary programs! This is a day of large enterprises both in business and in the kingdom of God. The religion of Jesus Christ must become a dominant force throughout the world. The most constructive of all the programs is missionary. Christianity must precede genuine democracy. The world must be Christianized before it is fully and perfectly democratized. And this calls for the commandeering of material and human assets such as has not yet been witnessed. "The Lord hath need of him," is a slogan that must be heard and answered to practically the last item of Christian resource before Christ will ride triumphantly into all the kingdoms of the earth.

XXVI

Money and the Kingdom

By Benjamin Young

IF you are a little nervous about your religion, you'd better not read this sermon. It is for those financially able and willing to support a religion that wears well and does not come out in the wash. This religion is sturdy enough to go into the market place and come out uncompromised; that can be with the depraved and daringly bad and come out undefiled; that sanctifies all that we touch. Religion is consciousness of God. Is he with you all the time?—Ed.

TEXT: "*Honor Jehovah with thy substance.*"—Prov. 3. 9.

MONEY IS A MEDIUM OF EXCHANGE. It represents certain values and is used to facilitate their transfer. It stands for power. This has been evidenced by the activity of this nation in the world war. It is that by which we transfer energy from one point to another. You can put your power to help a man into money and send it across the seas to his relief. The Centenary movement is the shifting of power to the place of utility. You can put a lot of appreciation into money. The trouble with a great many good people is that they want too little money to carry too much appreciation. In some sense you can put your prayers and love into money. I do not mean to say that prayer and love are money. I do say that unless you are willing to back your prayers with your money your prayers will be very cheap. Religion often travels with the coin of the realm.

WE OUGHT NOT TO DIVORCE OUR BUSINESS sense from our religion. There must necessarily be a business end to religion. The two blend in the proverb which is the text. Good business judgment and sound piety often go

together. To believe that more religion means less business is folly. Religion never did put a premium on ignorance. The program of the church and of the kingdom must be built up and pushed with all the sagacity and strength possible to keen-thinking men.

It would seem as though some people believed that the material extension of the kingdom of God was to be brought about by some decidedly immaterial factors. To them it is sacrilegious to talk about money in the sanctuary or to place emphasis upon things which make for the progress of institutions. A request for funds to equip an organization for larger service has sometimes brought on an epidemic of ecclesiastical fits. This abnormal view of money in its relation to the kingdom has made the question of finance a delicate one in some quarters.

However, the church has no subtle coinage in which it can carry the necessary values with which to meet the obligations of a matter-of-fact world. Talk is frequently very good, and it is often very cheap and foolish. If some of us could pay our bills by talking, we should likely never be in debt. Christianity must sometimes mean cash for the transfer of the power and the energy of the church to the remote parts of the world, for the extension of the enterprises of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL depends in great measure upon the organization and the business enterprise of the Christian Church. The Bible contains a revelation of God to men. It is a vehicle for carrying the divine thought and plan to men. Jesus Christ gathered around him a band of men—disciples, evangelists, and missionaries. Out of the apostolic group he organized the church. The "church of the living God" stands out clear and distinct in the New Testament record. The apostles were the representatives of the organized church. It is true that few ecclesiastical details are given, and this is not at all difficult to understand. We have the plan in rough outline, and it contemplated an organization as the vehicle for transmitting the message of truth to the remotest

boundaries of earth. In this view the importance of the church looms up. A great responsibility rests upon us, therefore, to make the instrument effective for the largest service in harmony with the commission of the Master.

It is strange that men should forget this view and its importance. Perhaps a freakish conception of religion had led men into error. In some instances religion has been separated from practical life. Religion has been a thing for the mountain's height and not for the crowded plain. It has been merely a transfiguration experience, or an ecstasy with no reference to the real problems of life. It has been a thing far removed from the world and to be kept apart from it, rather than a force for the casting out of demons. Men have been absorbed in rapt contemplation of Deity, or in the transcendental things of the higher world, and have forgotten that God could be found in the life very near them. In obedience to this spirit men have shut themselves away from the throng and have gone out into the desert or to summits of mountains, or lived in caves, so-called holy men, who have led generations into grievous error and given birth to systems which have had an evil influence upon human thinking. While some good men have been viewing the glories of the upper world, some other bad men have been working much mischief in the lower world about them.

PETER CARTWRIGHT was not of the former type. He had denounced in no uncertain terms the sins of certain men of the community. A group of these who had felt the sting of his burning message decided that they would attend the evangelist's services and get even with him by making an assault upon him in the sanctuary. Information came to Cartwright of the plan. At a given time the men filed into the church and went forward to occupy front seats ready for the emergency when the preacher should kneel in prayer. After the hymn Cartwright got down upon his knees to pray, but before beginning he said: "Brethren, the Scriptures say that a man ought sometimes to watch as well as to pray. Bow in prayer, friends, but allow me to pray with my eyes open

to-night; for I discover a bunch of scoundrels on these front seats who will require watching just now. Let us pray!"

COMMON SENSE. Thales went star gazing one night and tumbled into a well. When Paul said, "Set your affection on things which are above," he did not mean that a man was to bid farewell to the use of his brains. The apostle to the Gentiles was one of the sanest missionaries and one of the most far-visioned ambassadors of the cross that ever lived. It is important that we catch a vision of the glories of the higher world. It is true that there is quickening power in thinking about the joys that await the faithful in the celestial sphere. It is also to be remembered that a man can lose himself in the contemplation of the wonders of the heavenly city and get lost in the world in which he lives. Make "your calling and election sure," but bear in mind that if you are wholly absorbed in your election to a seat in glory, some fellow, noticing your interest in the things of the higher world, is apt to slip under your very nose and stuff the ballot-box, which might give him security to a seat in some high place on earth, where he ought not to be. Let us not divorce our religion from that which is sane and practical.

If, then, we do not part company with common sense, we shall believe that a church cannot run without that vehicle which is used to carry its power and even its love to the enterprises and interests of the kingdom of Christ in divers parts of the earth. A great infidel temple in one of our large cities went under the hammer because critics of the Christian system failed to back their own enterprise with hard cash. You cannot run any very large concern without some system of finance.

ARE YOU TOUCHY? Let no one be sensitive on the money question. If you will read the story of the developing church, as given by that matchless historian Luke, you will discover with what emphasis leaders urged the distribution of the power of the church for the benefit of all. Antioch was concerned with the condition of the church in the holy city. Philippi, and Thessalonica, and Athens and Ephesus were all

knit up by the genius of the great missionary to the work of the church in Jerusalem. In that day the cities of Syria and Macedonia were farther apart than the cities of Europe and America are to-day. The collection was the only way known to Paul whereby he could shift the power of the church from the more prosperous to the poorer communities. With all the progress which has been made in the arts and the sciences since that time there is to-day, for us, no different method.

IS THE CHURCH FULLY AWAKE to its responsibilities? The individual professes surprise when money is requested for the institutions of the church. The reply is often made to the appeal: "We have prayed for your institutions. Let us have faith and trust in God. 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'" I saw a clever motto not long ago in a grocery store. It read: "In God we trust, balance cash." "Some folk trust in God when credit is wanted and some still trust in God when the balance should be cash."

The Centenary program of Methodism is one of the most commanding of the church of all the centuries. Does the program call for too much? The world never saw such a crisis as confronts it in this hour. The church never heard such a call. War has beaten down the walls and the barriers between the nations. Universal suffering has opened up the fountains of human sympathy as never before in history. Civilization has faced the yawning chasm created by selfishness and sin. If Jesus came to "heal the broken-hearted and to preach deliverance to the captives," it is no less the function of his church to "set at liberty them that are bruised." Is not this a sufficient justification for this mighty program?

IT IS A GOOD TIME FOR ONE TO PRAY that he may catch the vision of a divine opportunity and accept it and use it as one of God's methods for the uplift and the salvation of the whole world.

THERE IS AN INTERESTING STORY told of a Madras missionary who had a famous horse that would not go until he had the "twist" put on and applied to one of his ears.

This horse would always balk when put in the carriage harness. The missionary lost much valuable time trying to get him started, and he tried many expedients to break him of balking. Finally he got the stable-boy to apply the twist to his ear. The pain from the application of the "twist" caused him to think of something else than the load behind him. Thus he would start off for the day. He got so used to this method that soon it was only necessary for the lad to reach up and twist the left ear of the horse. The natives were very much interested in the horse and said that he was like a clock. "He had to be wound up or he would not go." It was of no use to whip him or to talk to him, he just had to be "wound up" before he would begin his day's work.

The illustration is by no means perfect, for certainly it would never do to twist the ear of a church member to make him "go." Is it not a fact, however, that the membership of the church has been so cultivated that it must feel pressure before much is attempted for the kingdom of Jesus Christ? Have we not all sometimes evaded responsibilities and waited for the "twist" to be applied? Have we been quite as cheerful in our giving as we should have been?

LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD:

"Honor Jehovah with thy substance,
And with the first fruits of all thine increase" (Prov. 3. 9).

"Freely ye received, freely give" (Matt. 10. 8).

"The liberal soul shall be made fat" (Prov. 11. 25).

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over" (Luke 6. 38).

"It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20. 35).

The church of to-day must have individual and intelligent giving. It is the first business of a Christian to know something about the enterprises of his church. A man should know his church as it is related to the nation and to the nations of earth. Mighty works are being done in many quarters of the world through the power of the all-conquering Christ. No one can read the record from the Orient, from Korea, Japan,

India, and China without being deeply stirred with the evidences of the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon these ancient peoples.

WE MUST THINK IN LARGER TERMS. The program of Methodism, great as it is, is simply to relate us intelligently and rationally to the great work committed to the church by Jesus Christ. We have thought in pennies when we should have thought in dollars. The benevolent enterprises of the church shall command our attention. The commission of Jesus Christ fired with a strange enthusiasm the men of the apostolic day, but it was also the challenge of a great task to the men who should come after him in the distant ages. Jesus Christ spoke in the vocabulary of the human heart. He is a world Christ, and we are the followers of one whose conceptions invite to world thinking.

THE CHURCH MUST BE SYSTEMATIC IN ITS GIVING. A man's giving should not be merely from impulse or convenience. There is a more intelligent method. If I do not know the plan of the kingdom, I should try to understand it through the press and the literature of the church, and then give regularly and in a businesslike way to the benevolent activities of the church. A man ought to be an example of systematic beneficence to the members of his family and to the friends around him. The children should be taught to give. Sunday School Boards should see to it that the most approved methods are adopted in the Sunday schools for the cultivation of systematic beneficence. Religion must mean practical service for others. A tremendous responsibility rests upon parents. A generation trained in prayer, in service, in sacrifice, in the proper use of money for the kingdom of God will mean a world transformed in the immediate century.

THERE MUST BE PRAYERFUL GIVING. Let me settle this matter honestly and candidly before God. Let me pray over this matter, but not with my hand clutching my pocketbook. I should pray, as before the face of the Father,

and in great faith, that I may understand the problems and the burdens of the church, so that I may be able to give back to God from that which he has so kindly and graciously loaned me. I must give evidence of my stewardship.

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO GIVE IN MEMORY of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. How marvelous is this religion of the cross! What a challenging conception is back of the sacrifice of the Master! What a plan is this coming to such a climax on Calvary! What a price was paid for the redemption of men! The "seven last words" make their appeal for all men. The world was in his thought, and it was the world which broke his heart. He came not "to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Have I caught the spirit of the cross? Should I not open my life to that spirit, and in the terms of the sacrificial Christ, face my responsibility in the church as a Christ-man? As God has given for me, ought I not to give, that I may be possessed with the glowing consciousness of a duty well done and with the assurance of a vantage point, as I pray for the men of the world at the altars of my own church?

A SHOE DEALER of this city has these striking words on a placard in his office:

"God first,
Family second,
Shoes third."

On this placard you have the epitome of the whole philosophy of Christian giving.

"Honor Jehovah with thy substance,
And with the first-fruits of all thine increase.
So shall thy barns be filled with plenty,
And thy vats overflow with new wine."

(Prov. 3. 9, 10.)

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